Frommer's®

IRREVERENT guide to Los Angeles

4th Edition

By
Jeff Spurrier
with
Charchi Stinson

WILEY
Wiley Publishing, Inc.

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.com

Frommer's®

IRREVERENT

guide to Los Angeles

Frommer's®

IRREVERENT guide to Los Angeles

4th Edition

By

Jeff Spurrier

with

Charchi Stinson

WILEY

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

other titles in the

IRREVERENT GUIDE

series

Irreverent Amsterdam
Irreverent Boston
Irreverent Chicago
Irreverent Las Vegas
Irreverent London
Irreverent Manhattan
Irreverent New Orleans
Irreverent Paris
Irreverent Rome
Irreverent San Francisco
Irreverent Seattle & Portland
Irreverent Vancouver
Irreverent Walt Disney World®
Irreverent Washington, D.C.

About the Authors

Jeff Spurrier is based in LA and lives part of the year in Mexico. He has written for the *Atlantic Monthly, Men's Journal,* and *Outside Magazine.* An avid biker, Jeff rides Griffith Park's Garbage Hill with the East Side Posse every Thursday and, in June, takes the 600-mile AIDS LifeCycle bike ride from San Francisco to L.A.

Charchi Stinson is a fine-arts photographer who has lived in L.A. for 2 decades, half of that time in Silver Lake. She prefers Bronson Canyon over Runyon Canyon and for a late-night pick-me-up frequents the taco truck that parks on Sunset Boulevard between Stadium Way and Figueroa Street.

Published by:
Wiley Publishing, Inc.

111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

Copyright © 2006 Wiley Publishing, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978/750-8400, fax 978/646-8600. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Legal Department, Wiley Publishing, Inc., 10475 Crosspoint Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46256, 317/572-3447, fax 317/572-4355, or online at http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions.

Wiley and the Wiley Publishing logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates. Frommer's is a trademark or registered trademark of Arthur Frommer. Used under license. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7645-9885-2
ISBN-10: 0-7645-9885-6

Interior design contributed to by Marie Kristine Parial-Leonardo

Editor: Stephen Bassman
Production Editor: Heather Wilcox
Cartographer: Andrew Murphy
Photo Editor: Richard Fox
Production by Wiley Indianapolis Composition Services

For information on our other products and services or to obtain technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800/762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317/572-3993 or fax 317/572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic formats.

Manufactured in the United States of America

5 4 3 2 1

A Disclaimer

Prices fluctuate in the course of time, and travel information changes under the impact of the varied and volatile factors that influence the travel industry. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information throughout this book and the contents of this publication are believed correct at the time of printing. Nevertheless, the publishers cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions or for changes in details given in this guide or for the consequences of any reliance on the information provided by the same. Assessments of attractions and so forth are based upon the author's own experience and therefore, descriptions given in this guide necessarily contain an element of opinion, which may not reflect the publisher's opinion or dictate a reader's own experience on another occasion. Readers are invited to write to the publisher with ideas, comments, and suggestions for future editions.

Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings. Keep a close eye on cameras, purses, and wallets, all favorite targets of thieves and pickpockets.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

Maps

Map 1 Los Angeles Neighborhoods 2

YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW 8

Where to find the best views of the city (8) • How to drive the drive (9) • How to pass the parking test (10) • Where to smoke (10) • How to stay out of trouble (11) • Female trouble (11) • How to see a whole bunch of union guys standing around shooting the s—t with the rent-a-cops while a movie/TV program/commercial isn't being made (11) • Why we give our cars names (12) • How to get around without a car (12)

1 ACCOMMODATIONS 14

Basic Stuff 18

Winning the Reservations Game 18

Is There a Right Address? 18

The Lowdown 19

Wrong side of the freeway, right side of the wallet (19) • Sunset Strip joints for the hipeoisie (19) • Convention-al choices with unconventional style (20) • For Health Nuts (21) • Bunking on Bunker Hill (21) • Boardwalk daze (21) • The international hostel experience (22) • Upscale homes near the homeless (23) • Beach bums and beauties (23) • The royal treatment (24) • And the "Dorian Gray Slept Here Award" goes to (25) • And in second place (25) • Escape to Catalina Island (25) • B&Bs in Pasadena (26) • Hotels for finishing your screenplay (27) •

Icons of Beverly Hills (27) • Slums of Beverly Hills (28) • Gay gay gay (28) • East beats West (29) • Miracle miler (29) • Smells like roach spray, tastes like Marilyn (30) • Très *snotty (30) • Anti-*très *snotty (31) • Another midcentury marvel (31) • Classic views (32) • The price is right… isn't it? Please? (32)*

Maps

Map 2 Los Angeles Accommodations Orientation 16
Map 3 Hollywood Accommodations 33
Map 4 Downtown Accommodations 34
Map 5 L.A.'s Westside & Beverly Hills Accommodations 35

The Index **36**
An A to Z of places to stay, with vital statistics

2 DINING **46**

Basic Stuff **50**
How to Dress 51
Getting the Right Table 51

The Lowdown **51**
Eastside essentials (51) • L.A. icons: safe for eating (52) • L.A. icons: for drinking only (no eating) (54) • More Italian than Chef Boyardee (54) • Burgers and dogs (55) • A side order of belly dancers (56) • Tongue-Thai-ed (56) • Living treasures of Little Tokyo (57) • Eat it raw (58) • French connection (59) • Forget it, Jake—it's Chinatown (60) • Late-night bites (60) • Where to write your screenplay (61) • Planet Carnivore (62) • Planet Vegan (62) • Organic orgasms (63) • Bend it like Bollywood (64) • Attitude a la carte (65) • Breakfast with bohos (65) • Sex food (66) • Escape from LAX: Airport Dining (66) • Tired hangouts for the hipeoise (67) • Queer food (67) • Damn the Merlot! Fill 'er Up (68) • You can't go wrong (68) • Tacos, pupusas, tortillas (69) • Cheap eats (70) • What is it about fire stations that gets people salivating? (70) • Good evening, Vietnam! (71) • Location, location, location (71)

Maps

Map 6 Los Angeles Dining Orientation 48
Map 7 Hollywood Dining 73
Map 8 Downtown Dining 74
Map 9 L.A.'s Westside & Beverly Hills Dining 75

The Index **76**
An A to Z list of places to dine, with vital statistics

3 DIVERSIONS 90

Basic Stuff 94

Getting Your Bearings 94

The Lowdown 94

We are unreal (94) • Wild kingdom (95) • Ethnics 'R' Us (96) • Navigating the Getty (97) • Wall eyes (98) • New downtown landmarks (99) • Annual events (99) • Neon Sights (100) • Autoeroticism (103) • Architecture Tours (103) • Who needs MoMA? (104) • More free art (104) • Words on paper and in your ear (105) • Art openings (106) • Community art (107) • Left of MoCA (108) • Oddball museums (109) • Beautiful buildings we haven't torn down for mini-malls...yet (110) • Downtown: not for skyscrapers only (110) • Hollywood icons (111) • Valentino and other frights (112) • Living in concrete (113) • Elite art in public places (113) • Parks of note (113) • Behind the scenes (114) • Garden Spots (115)

Maps

Map 10 Los Angeles Diversions Orientation 92
Map 11 Hollywood Diversions 116
Map 12 Downtown Diversions 117

The Index 118

An A to Z list of diversions, with vital statistics

4 GETTING OUTSIDE 128

Basic Stuff 130

The Lowdown 130

Inner-city beaches (130) • Caddy hacks (131) • Feets do your thing (132) • Pollution's a beach (134) • Surf City, here we come (135) • Ringside seats for the circus (136) • Camping it up (136) • Where to be humiliated in pickup basketball games (137) • Fat-tire fanatic (138) • The dawning of the age of aquariums (140) • Peerless piers (141) • Stairways to heaven (141) • Peace and quiet...finally (142) • The recovery process (143)

5 SHOPPING 144

Basic Stuff 148

Target Zones 148
Bargain Hunting 150

The Lowdown 150

Ethnic one-stops (150) • Nice (Spice) Rack (151) • Tokyo prose (152) • Armchair travel (153) • Produce supreme (153) • Zeitgeist landmark, audio (154) • Nice buns (155) • Word freaks (155) • Midcentury mania (156) • Habitat (157) • Used (or refused) (157) • High-end *vintage (158) • Strange and bizarre, disturbing and wonderful (158) • A different kind of haircut (160) • Living treasures of Little Tokyo (160) • Pacific rim shots (161) • Clothes for slumming celebs (162) • One-of-a-kinds (162) • Mentioning unmentionables (163) • Gewgaws, knickknacks, froufrou (164) • Set stylists' resources (165) • No one will believe it's secondhand (165) • Shoe fetish (165) • Museum Shops (166) • Music/records (166) • Bookstores with a twist (167) • Browsers' havens (168) • Between the covers for kids (169) • Paper, plus (170) • Toys for adults (170) • Dildos 'R' Us (171) • Easy rider (171) • Road weenies rule! (171)*

Maps

Map 13 Los Angeles Shopping 146

The Index **172**

An A to Z list of places to shop, with vital statistics

6 NIGHTLIFE **184**

Basic Stuff **188**

The Lowdown **189**

The A list (189) • Downtown gutter crawl (190) • So-last-year bars (191) • Noise makers (191) • Tiki Ti (192) • Hotel bars (192) • Where the real swingers have moved on to (194) • Okay, you're really not a pathetic loser, you just want to see some titties and have a drink (196) • Living L.A. rock roots (196) • Bars for locals (197) • Pub-crawl, Hollywood-style (197) • Toujours gay (198)

Maps

Map 14 Los Angeles Nightlife 186

The Index **199**

An A to Z list of nightspots, with vital statistics

7 ENTERTAINMENT **204**

Basic Stuff **208**

Getting Tickets 208

Sources 209

The Lowdown **209**

Class acts (209) • Outdoor venues (210) • Moving-picture palaces (211) • Taking the ultrawide view (212) • Special stages (213) • And now for something totally different (214) • Big dreams, small spaces (215) • I've Got No Strings (216) • Bowling for boredom (216) • Bohos with flip-flops (216) • Making it up (217) • Professional sports (217)

Maps

Map 15 Los Angeles Entertainment 206

The Index **218**

An A to Z list of venues, with vital statistics

HOTLINES & OTHER BASICS 224
Airports (225) • Airport transportation (225) • ATM (226) • Buses (226) • Bus-bike combination (227) • Car rentals (227) • Child care (228) • DASH (228) • Disability services (229) • Doctors (229) • Driving around (229) • Earthquakes (230) • Emergencies (231) • Foreign-currency exchange (231) • Gay and lesbian resources (232) • Gridlock (232) • HIV/AIDS (232) • Homeless (232) • Newspapers (233) • Parking (233) • Pharmacies (234) • Phone facts (234) • Post offices (234) • Radio stations (234) • Smoking (235) • Subways and trains (235) • Taxis (236) • Tipping (236) • TV tapings (236)

GENERAL INDEX 237
Accommodations Index (241)
Restaurant Index (242)

INTRODUCTION

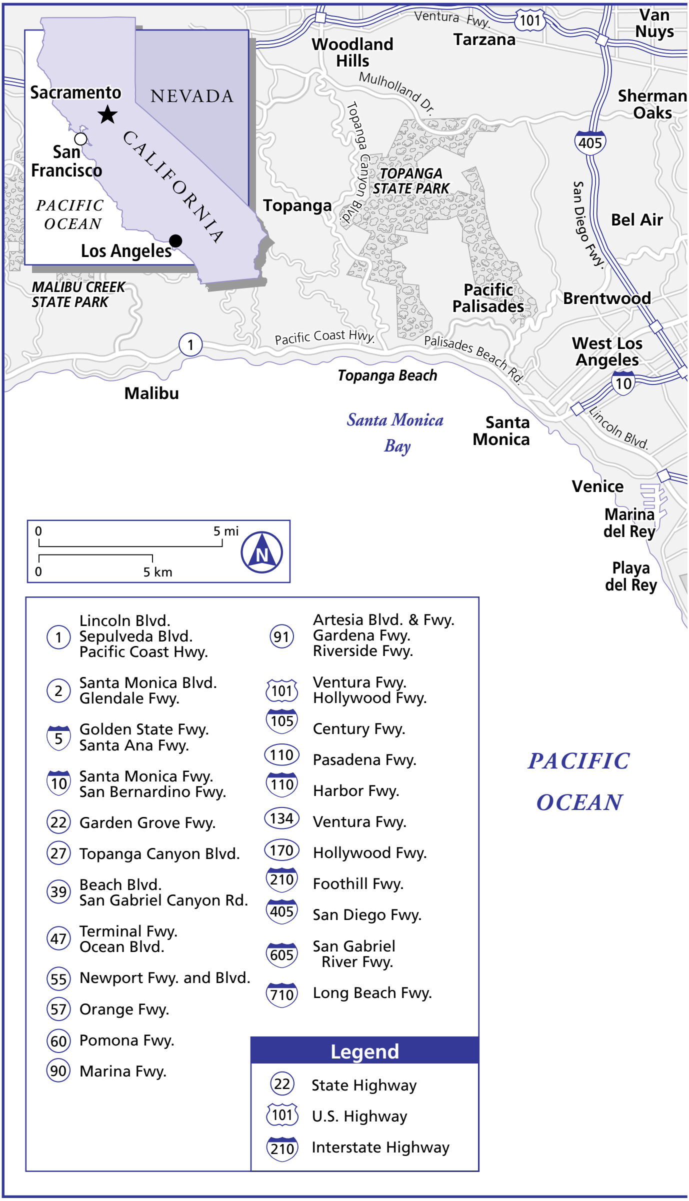
Los Angeles. Rhymes with scandalous, unscramble us, helluva mess. (Sort of.)

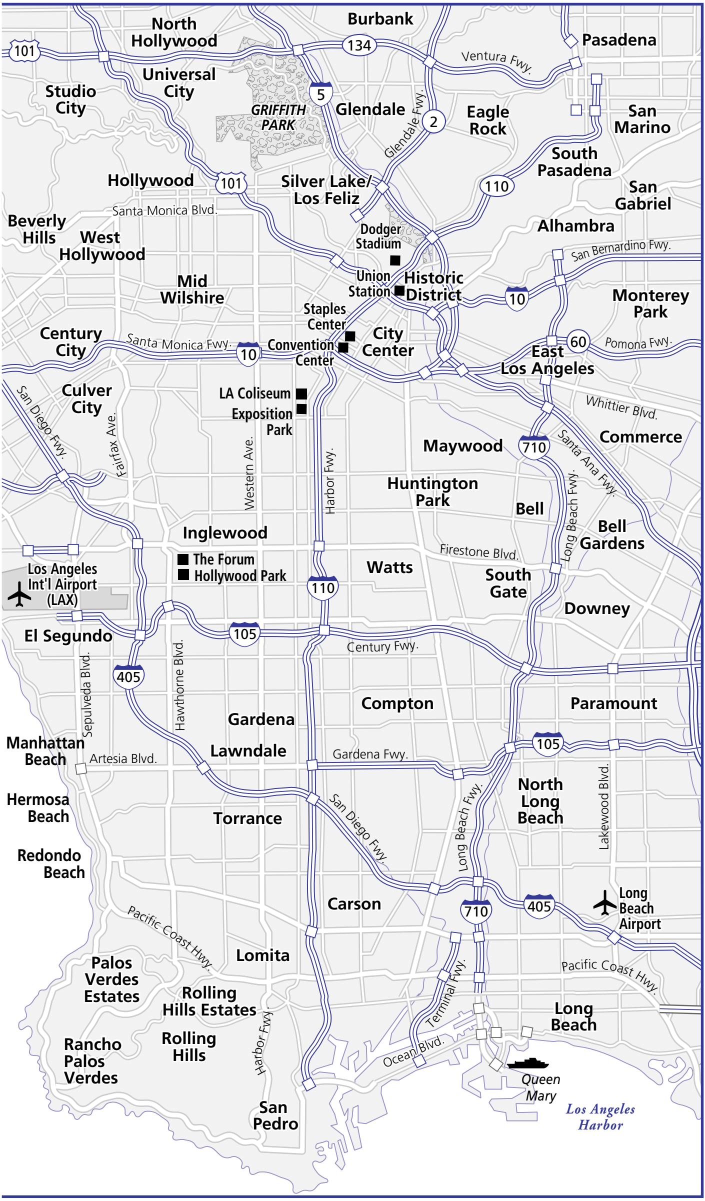
More complex is the image that social critic Mike Davis coined—"the car-sex-death-fascism continuum"—and that's a notion that's hard to argue with, bringing together the light and the dark, riots and beach parties, *Blade Runner* and *Father Knows Best,* palm trees trembling as the ground heaves. That's the latest mask, but there are others. Los Angeles has been called Cleveland with Palm Trees, Circus Without a Tent, La-La Land, City of Lost Angels, Iowa by the Sea, Digital Coast. I prefer the Japanese term "Los," so coined because "Angeles" is too full of unfamiliar sounds. And "Los" in Spanish is simply the definite plural article, "the," without any adjoining noun. That's what this place is. "The..."—*you* fill in the blank.

As mystery writer Ross Macdonald noted, "There's nothing wrong with Southern California that a rise in the ocean wouldn't cure."

Quite possibly we won't have to wait that long. Anyone living in L.A. who says he doesn't think about earthquakes is either lying or a newcomer. Angelenos keep unopened water jugs in the garage or in a shed (plus money for when all the ATMs stop functioning) and plan escape routes from work to home and rendezvous points for family. They know it could all come tumbling down tomorrow. Cancelled in midseason, so to speak. They pretend not to worry but never forget that feeling of coming out of

Map 1: Los Angeles Neighborhoods


Ventura Fwy.
101
Van Nuys
Woodland Hills
Tarzana
Mulholland Dr.
Sherman Oaks
405
Sacramento
NEVADA
San Francisco
CALIFORNIA
PACIFIC OCEAN
Los Angeles
Topanga Canyon Blvd.
TOPANGA STATE PARK
Topanga
San Diego Fwy.
Bel Air
MALIBU CREEK STATE PARK
Pacific Palisades
Brentwood
1
Pacific Coast Hwy.
Palisades Beach Rd.
West Los Angeles
10
Topanga Beach
Malibu
Santa Monica Bay
Santa Monica
Lincoln Blvd.
Venice
Marina del Rey
Playa del Rey
0
5 mi
0
5 km
N
1 Lincoln Blvd. Sepulveda Blvd. Pacific Coast Hwy.
2 Santa Monica Blvd. Glendale Fwy.
5 Golden State Fwy. Santa Ana Fwy.
10 Santa Monica Fwy. San Bernardino Fwy.
22 Garden Grove Fwy.
27 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
39 Beach Blvd. San Gabriel Canyon Rd.
47 Terminal Fwy. Ocean Blvd.
55 Newport Fwy. and Blvd.
57 Orange Fwy.
60 Pomona Fwy.
90 Marina Fwy.
91 Artesia Blvd. & Fwy. Gardena Fwy. Riverside Fwy.
101 Ventura Fwy. Hollywood Fwy.
105 Century Fwy.
110 Pasadena Fwy.
110 Harbor Fwy.
134 Ventura Fwy.
170 Hollywood Fwy.
210 Foothill Fwy.
405 San Diego Fwy.
605 San Gabriel River Fwy.
710 Long Beach Fwy.
Legend
22 State Highway
101 U.S. Highway
210 Interstate Highway
PACIFIC OCEAN


North Hollywood
Burbank
101
134
Pasadena
Ventura Fwy.
Universal City
Studio City
5
GRIFFITH PARK
Glendale
Glendale Fwy.
2
Eagle Rock
San Marino
South Pasadena
Hollywood
101
Silver Lake/ Los Feliz
110
San Gabriel
Santa Monica Blvd.
Beverly Hills
West Hollywood
Dodger Stadium
Alhambra
San Bernardino Fwy.
Mid Wilshire
Union Station
Historic District
10
Monterey Park
Staples Center
Century City
Santa Monica Fwy.
10
Convention Center
City Center
60
Pomona Fwy.
East Los Angeles
Culver City
LA Coliseum
Exposition Park
Whittier Blvd.
San Diego Fwy.
Fairfax Ave.
Western Ave.
Harbor Fwy.
Maywood
710
Commerce
Santa Ana Fwy.
Huntington Park
Bell
Long Beach Fwy.
Bell Gardens
Inglewood
The Forum
Hollywood Park
Firestone Blvd.
Los Angeles Int'l Airport (LAX)
Watts
South Gate
110
Downey
105
El Segundo
Century Fwy.
405
Sepulveda Blvd.
Hawthorne Blvd.
Compton
Paramount
Gardena
105
Manhattan Beach
Artesia Blvd.
Lawndale
Gardena Fwy.
North Long Beach
Lakewood Blvd.
Hermosa Beach
Torrance
San Diego Fwy.
Long Beach Fwy.
Redondo Beach
Carson
710
405
Long Beach Airport
Pacific Coast Hwy.
Lomita
Pacific Coast Hwy.
Palos Verdes Estates
Rolling Hills Estates
Terminal Fwy.
Long Beach
Harbor Fwy.
Rancho Palos Verdes
Rolling Hills
Ocean Blvd.
Queen Mary
Los Angeles Harbor
San Pedro

a dead sleep, full-on REM, to hear the earth moving, giant claws scratching against a sky-wide blackboard, and the sound of dishes, books, and appliances tumbling off of tables and dressers and chairs and mixing into a jumble on the floor, all broken glass and bits of wood and the darkness over everything. Then there's earthquake weather. Depending on your point of reference, that either means unusually muggy (the Long Beach quake of 1925) or dry with Santa Ana gusts (the Slymar quake of '72). There are other warning signs, too. The cat vanishes. Dogs hide in closets. Birds stop singing.

There is a myth that L.A. has no neighborhoods, but in fact the city is nothing *but* neighborhoods—they're just not constructed in the style of jammed European inner urban centers. They're closer in form to the neighborhoods of the people whose lands they come from, Central America and Asia. The white-bread image of California is gone forever. We have become a microcosm of the Pacific Rim.

There are known borders: Watts, Beverly Hills, Hollywood, West Hollywood, West L.A., Downtown, East L.A., Pasadena, South Bay, South L.A. Just north of town looms the Valley, huge and amorphous, the backdrop for *The Rockford Files,* the first TV series to show the seamy side of the suburbs, a land populated by con men and cheap hustlers. And in the last 20 years, the Eastside–Westside dichotomy has become more pronounced—not as a Balkanized division, but rather closer to the Lower Manhattan–Upper Manhattan contrast. In the meantime, America's porn industry is based in the Valley.

Of course, this is a situation in continual flux. Echo Park has recently emerged as the new Silver Lake (now that Beck's former 'hood has priced itself out of the starving-artist/musician market), with boutiques springing up on Echo Park Avenue and the tenements in the neighborhood getting refurbished, the shag carpeting pulled up to reveal hardwood floors. Even that tired, round-heeled streetwalker Hollywood has gotten a makeover, upgraded from X to PG-13. It still has plenty of seedy side streets and alleys, but overall there are fewer runaways, empty lots, trash, hookers, and dealers. Waiting in the wings: Eagle Rock, Highland Park, Alhambra. And for more than 20 years, we've been hearing that Downtown, the high-rise heart of Los Angeles, was on the verge of revitalization, primed to rise phoenixlike from the ashes of skid-row campfires. And amazingly, the bird is stirring—not quite airborne yet, but getting there. City Hall is open again after more than $300 million of earthquake repair and retrofitting; the modernist Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels towers over the 101 Freeway at Temple and Grand like a priest over an altar boy, while a few blocks away the Walt Disney Concert Hall, with its exploded Frank Gehry design, glitters crazily in the sun. Bringing everybody down is "the Death Star," the 13-story CalTrans headquarters at 1st and Main streets, a solid mass of steel grills and cantilevered overhangs that was recently voted the ugliest building of Downtown by readers of the *Downtown News.* Trendy hotels move in, like the restored El Dorado Hotel at 4th Street. Throughout the Historic District Beaux Arts office buildings and warehouses are transformed into residential "artists lofts" and digital offices; in the old Banking District, the San Fernando, Hellman, and Continental buildings are all being turned into loft apartments to serve a postmodern generation of childless white-collar workers. Sure, the air is better on the Westside, but after the dot.com implosion and the gasploitation policy of the Bush administration, those cheap rents in Downtown are looking mighty attractive. And coming sometime in 2007, a spanking new 50,000-square-foot supermarket, Downtown's first in a long, long time.

What can I say? L.A. is a city of neighborhoods, and if you don't see the demarcations, it's because you're not from here.

"Crime Blotter," *Los Angeles Independent,* a weekly throwaway: "2pm, around Santa Monica Boulevard and Wilton Place. A 28-year-old man stole a 42-year-old man's cell phone from his waistband. When the victim asked for his phone back, the suspect took out a pair of tweezers and told the victim to shut up...."

It's almost 15 years since the Rebellion, the Uprising, the Riots of '92 that followed the innocent verdict for the cops who beat Rodney King—but no matter what name you use, they're still alive in people's memories, those warm spring evenings when the vast plain from Downtown to the sea was marked by towering columns of smoke—black, not gray—and no hint of fire engine sirens anywhere. Windows were smashed, appliance-store doors crashed open by minitrucks, all-you-can-carry-away specials at liquor stores. The noir L.A. of mystery writers Macdonald, Raymond Chandler, and James M. Cain seems almost innocent by comparison. Only the speed-addled sci-fi of Philip K. Dick comes close. Yes, violent crimes are down 27% but maybe only because you can't do a lot of damage with a pair of tweezers. On the other hand, according to the latest Public Policy Institute of California survey, one-third of L.A. County residents hope to move away within 5 years. Our biggest complaints? Traffic congestion and affordable housing. (The recent spate of random car-to-car freeway shootings don't help much, either.) And while residents are heading for the exits like rats off a sinking ship, visitors are coming in record numbers: more than 24 million in 2004.

This is the end of the continent, where the concept of reinvention was perfected, a natural development of the studio system. From breast and penile implants to personal histories created out of whole cloth, reality is a commodity here, something to speculate on, manipulate when possible, shoot against a blue screen if necessary, and cross-market into all digitized media. *Of course* '50s and '60s gas-guzzling clunkers are hip accessories for the Silver Lake set; *of course* roaming the cemeteries to locate the graves of dead idols is a major goth e-ticket. These things are *real:* old steel, roll-'n'-tuck leather booths, the crumbling bones of celluloid fantasy.

And isn't it a beautiful day? Again? You can almost see the Hollywood sign. If the E. coli count isn't too high, maybe you can even go in the water.

How much in the American landscape is Los Angeles guilty for? Think about the drive-in, the supermarket, the strip mall. L.A. is flat; L.A. is horizontal. We are locked into our cars with symbiotic intensity. Mary McNamara, columnist for the *Los Angeles Times,* notes, "We would rather be bumper-to-bumper than shoulder to shoulder." In the words of art critic Ralph Rugoff, "the city unspools like a film strip." The architecture is jumbled, Craftsman bungalow next to faux-colonial next to Neutra modern. Los Angeles, said Carey McWilliams in his classic *Southern California Country,* is "a tribal burial ground for antique customs and incongruous styles." The California bungalow was a perfect fit for L.A., a cheap single-family home made for lateral spread and a mild climate.

More than anything, the city's topographical character was defined by the Big Red Car, the best interurban public transportation system of its time in the country, maybe in the world. Over 4 decades, starting less than a decade after the Civil War, this rail line grew, merging public and private lines, linking 42 cities and towns in Southern California. It worked well, so by the 1930s automobile manufacturers and petroleum refiners were pushing the notion of an Autopia, an auxiliary automotive mass-transit system. By the 1960s, Autopia ruled—and the Red Car and its assorted peers were summarily ripped up, paved over, buried in asphalt. People want cars, the politicos financed by the corporations proclaimed, and that silly mass transit was just clogging up the roads. Now Los Angeles has the Metro and is belatedly trying to change 50 years of car-conditioning. Maybe it'll work. Check back with us in 50 years. In the meantime, ozone levels are rising along with the proliferation of light trucks and SUVs. Remarkably, you see hybrid vehicles fairly commonly now, a statement not only that you care, but you can *afford* to care. Mass transit is also improving. We now have 72 rail miles running from Pasadena to Long Beach, the Valley to Downtown. The latest addition to the grid is the Orange Line, linking 13 stations in the Valley, and by 2009 the Eastside Extension into East L.A. and points beyond should be done.

One thing is certain: The city will never stop growing—as long as there's water. And that's what it all comes down to in the end. Until you've lived through a drought here, you can easily forget that in its natural state this is a semiarid subtropical region. By rights, the San Fernando Valley should be closer to the Mojave Desert in character. It took a cabal of businessmen, big landowners, Realtors, and bankers to dream up the Owens Valley project, funneling runoff from the Sierra Nevada to the cow metropolis 250 miles south. The City of L.A., aided by the efforts of the federal government, essentially stole the land of Owens Valley farmers, sealing up water rights for decades. It wasn't as simplistic as Polanski's *Chinatown* implied—after all, that was only a movie, a morality play wrapped up as a mystery. The reality was way more proto-corporate, a reflection of the can-do arrogance of the era, when nature was to be contained, rearranged, or razed, all in the name of progress. The California Aqueduct was completed in 1913 and is considered a modern engineering feat second only to the Panama Canal. When the spigot was finally opened by chief engineer Mulholland, he laconically told the mayor: "There it is. Take it."

So what's in the water? The 2003 *Water Quality Report* listed the following: aluminum, arsenic, barium, bromate, chlorine residual, chromium, coliform, fluoride, haloacetic acids, nitrate, radionuclides (including radium and uranium), tetrachloroethylene, trichloroethylene, trihalomethanes, and turbidity. (Mmm, could I get that on the rocks?)

L.A. Here it is. Take it.

YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW

Where to find the best views of the city... It depends on what you consider "the city," naturally, but for most of the population, this means the high-rises of Downtown, as seen in so many establishing shots of TV programs and movies. As an L.A. landmark, that oasis of skyscrapers is as instantly recognizable as Paris's Eiffel Tower. If you're right in the heart of Downtown and want to see what it looks like from close-up, the Bonaventure Hotel bar, on the hotel's top floor, offers the most intimate look at the biggest buildings. Another classic vista is from the seventh-floor Sky Bridge that links the Bonaventure to the Ketcham YWCA. For a date-impressing view that comes with an overpriced drink, dim lights, mediocre food, and a stunning 360-degree perspective, go to Windows, the restaurant on the top of the 32-floor Transamerica building, 1150 S. Olive St. (Tel 213/222-1450). For a free fish-eye view, go to the 360-degree observation deck of the Tom Bradley Tower Room on the 26th floor of City Hall, 200 N. Spring St. If you want a good overview of the L.A. basin, especially on a clear winter day, head up to Griffith Park and walk up to the top of Mount Hollywood. From here you can see all the way from the southern Valley to Palos Verdes, Catalina, Hollywood, and Santa Monica. For a midrange perspective, go to Lot 2 of Dodger Stadium on a nongame day and you'll get a view of the full Downtown skyline, framed by palm trees and some of the huge baseballs that mark the lots, providing for a nice campy touch. To get that typical freeway traffic blur, the overpass on Broadway, between Downtown and Chinatown, is perfect. The Chinese Moon Bridge in Echo Park, at 1632 Balboa Ave., has a spectacular view of downtown skyscrapers; for an overview of L.A.'s wonderful classic neon signs, go to Wilshire Boulevard at Commonwealth and Hoover. On the Westside, there's nothing to compare with the view from the Getty. It sits on one of the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains and offers a spectacular panoramic view of the city: Bel Air, Westwood, Century City, the Hollywood Hills, Palos Verdes, Catalina, Santa Monica, the Pacific. Sunsets here are unbelievable. The best view of the Valley is when you're not in it but above it. Take the 50-mile-long Mulholland Drive west from the 101 at Studio City; it runs along the ridge of the Santa Monica Mountains all the way to the sea. The panoramic nighttime views of the overwhelming web of sodium-vapor streetlights are stunning. But be warned—this isn't Lovers' Lane, so don't park. It doesn't look like it, but this can be a high-crime area—bodies get dumped here; people get held up.

How to drive the drive... There's nearly 6,000 lane-miles of freeway here and the average commuter puts in 5 full days sitting in the car, fuming. And that's an improvement. The best freeway experience is swooping up (or down) the 110 interchange to the 105, the closest thing to a free amusement park ride on four wheels you'll find. If you're planning on being here for any length of time or doing more than a minimal amount of driving, buy a *Thomas Guide for Los Angeles.* In it the streets are all indexed, and the front map shows the grids clearly and accurately. The freeways have both numeric and destination names, and people use either interchangeably. When getting directions, always ask for the nearest major cross streets. Rush hours used to reliably be from 6 to 9 in the morning and 3 to 7 in the evening, but recently it seems like it's always crowded. Nearly three-quarters of respondents to a survey of L.A. County residents said traffic congestion was the major annoyance of life here. If you can avoid rush hour, do so. Depending on the freeway, two or three people constitute a car pool and can travel in the Diamond lanes, which are faster and less crowded. A yellow light means step on it. Pedestrians in crosswalks at lights always get (and expect) the right-of-way. Always assume that the other driver is drunk, talking on a cellphone, incompetent, and (not or) armed. Defensive driving is absolutely essential. And above all, don't get mad. Rage is for losers. If the LAPD stops you, do not attempt to run them over in your attempted escape. It just makes them mad.

How to pass the parking test... Parking is the one dark cloud that spoils our otherwise clear driving horizon. (That and SIG-alerts, inversion layers, car chases, drive-bys, carjackings, and so forth, but for now, let's just talk parking.) Want to avoid the inevitable? Spend a few extra bucks and use the valet. This strategy is especially helpful around Melrose Avenue and West Hollywood. The range of establishments that offers valet parking extends from hotels and restaurants to indoor malls, hospitals, theme parks, and gyms. Control freak? You can park your car yourself before you dine (although you'll still have to pay). Costs average about $4 to $5 a pop but can be as low as $1.50 (Taix restaurant; p. 88) or run as high as $40 (Shutters on the Beach Hotel; p. 43). Want a cheap thrill? Valet park at the Beverly Hills Hotel, where even the dumpiest heartland tourist in his rented econo-box is treated like a celebrity. In Beverly Hills, Glendale, and Santa Monica, look for the city-run garages and lots. Downtown you'll have to park in a private lot because street parking is limited. However, if you don't want to dump your ride in Joe's Auto Park, look for a space where the locals search: Wall Street, Los Angeles Street, 4th Street east of Olive, and 1st Street at Bixel. But always check street signs for rush-hour and permit-only restrictions.

Where to smoke... Outside. That's it. And even then you're limited. You can't smoke in Dodger Stadium, in the state parks during fire season, (or on most local beaches). L.A. has some of the most restrictive laws against indoor smoking in the nation and we've carried that campaign into the great outdoors. There's no smoking allowed in bars, restaurants, or offices. You may still smoke in parking lots, however, and many restaurants have now added patios or sidewalk areas for their smoking customers.

How to stay out of trouble... Don't pick up any hookers on Sunset's Hooker Row; don't buy dope in MacArthur Park; don't flip anybody off on the freeway; don't use your horn except as a warning; and don't ever tailgate, especially after a rain. Obey all laws when you're in the vicinity of the intersections of Hollywood Boulevard at Vine Street, Cahuenga Boulevard at Whitley Street, or Highland and Sycamore avenues. All three intersections have video surveillance cameras directly linked to the Hollywood police station. If you get stopped by the police, stay in your car, have your license ready, and assume the position. *Make no sudden moves; keep your hands empty and visible.* Offer no bribes, make no jokes or excuses. Don't jaywalk. You will be ticketed if there's a cop anywhere close by. Have a nice day.

Female trouble... Forget the bimbo image of California blondes: That's strictly media hype. L.A. has more women-owned businesses than any other metro area in the country, employing more than one million people. And our racial intermarriage rate is five times the national average. Nevertheless, if you're female and out late at night in your car, always drive with the passenger-side door locked and the window up. If you break down on the freeway and can get to a call box, do so. After you report your problem, get back into your car and wait. Do not get out until a tow truck or the Highway Patrol pulls over.

How to see a whole bunch of union guys standing around shooting the s—t with the rent-a-cops while a movie/TV program/commercial isn't being made... Log on to www.eidc.com, the website of the Entertainment Industry Development Corporation. Here you can find out who's to blame for the invasion of big trucks loaded with arc lights and speakers that has taken over your neighborhood and set up a self-contained base camp for the night. It also lists road closures and hotline numbers (Los Angeles Film Office: Tel 323/957-1000 during office hours, 8am–6pm; after hours call 800/201-5982), as well as "the honest-to-god official 'Code of Conduct' attached to each permit," in which production companies are reminded that "It should not be expected that everyone in the surrounding environment will alter their lives to accommodate the needs of film production." What? Who do you work for? Let me speak to your supervisor!

Why we give our cars names... If you've never lived here, you can't begin to appreciate the significance of our auto-submissive neurosis—a sick relationship if ever there was one. Like, did you know that a '63 Bonneville convertible is considered a steal at $15,000 and that it'll probably go up 15% in value in the next year? Cars *matter* here—that's all there is to it. Owning one is like having a dog sled in the Yukon during the gold rush. So rent yourself a *nice* car: You'll be spending a lot of time in it.

How to get around without a car... You wouldn't expect it, but Angelenos love their sorta-new subway/light-rail system. The cars are clean and quiet and you can almost always find a seat. There are only 235,000 daily riders, a figure that will certainly escalate now that the Gold Line (to Pasadena and points east) is finished. The best deal is a $3 Day Pass, saving money upon your third boarding. The system works on the honor system, $1.25 a ride, and if you're caught without a ticket, fines start at $250; repeat offenders may face felony burglary charges. Or climb on the bus. Service generally sucks, but they're *clean*—not in the aisles but out the exhaust pipes, where it matters. We have the largest compressed-natural-gas fleet in the country. If you're here longer, consider the EZ Pass, $58, which is good for a month of riding on 20 different bus and train lines, from Santa Monica to Santa Clarita, Pasadena to Culver City. Or if you want your own wheels, consider Flexcar, through which you can rent a Honda hybrid at $10 per hour. This is a membership program and, aside from the $35 initial application fee, there is no other paperwork involved, no waiting at the checkout counter, and no time limit on how long the car can be reserved. The only drawback is the limited number of locations: five in Downtown, three in Pasadena, and two each in Santa Monica and Westwood. Call Tel 213/482-FLEX or check www.flexcar.com to make a reservation. And if you're on a bike, www.bikemetro.com is the place to look for easy and almost safe cross-town routes.

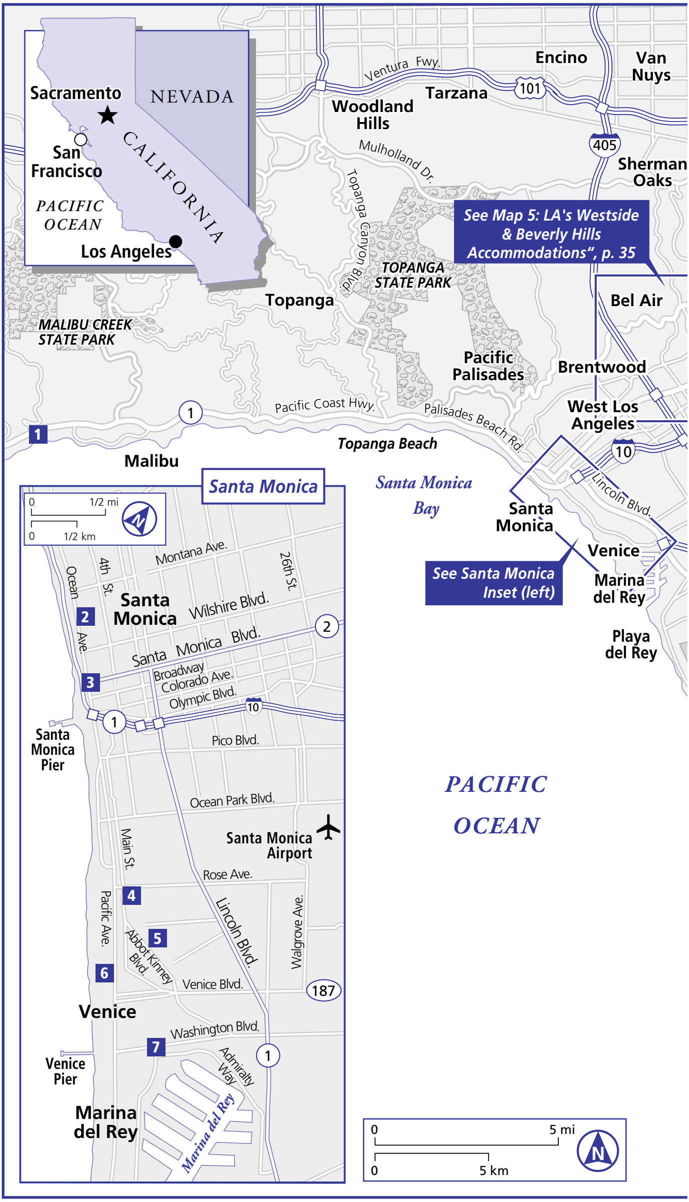
ACCOMM

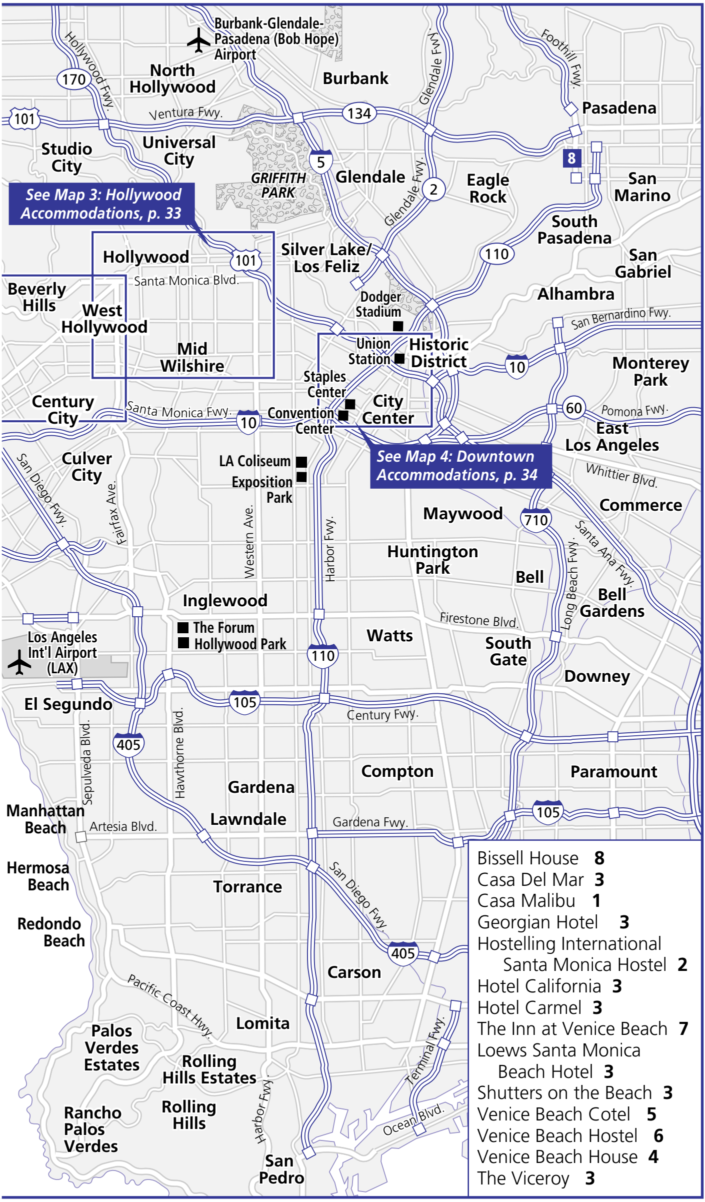
Do Not
Disturb

ODATIONS

1

Map 2: Los Angeles Accommodations Orientation


Sacramento
NEVADA
San Francisco
CALIFORNIA
PACIFIC OCEAN
Los Angeles
Ventura Fwy.
Encino
Van Nuys
101
Tarzana
Woodland Hills
Mulholland Dr.
405
Sherman Oaks
Topanga Canyon Blvd.
See Map 5: LA's Westside & Beverly Hills Accommodations", p. 35
TOPANGA STATE PARK
Topanga
Bel Air
MALIBU CREEK STATE PARK
Pacific Palisades
Brentwood
1
Pacific Coast Hwy.
Palisades Beach Rd.
West Los Angeles
1
Topanga Beach
10
Malibu
Santa Monica
Santa Monica Bay
Lincoln Blvd.
Santa Monica
Venice
See Santa Monica Inset (left)
Marina del Rey
Playa del Rey
0
1/2 mi
0
1/2 km
N
Montana Ave.
26th St.
4th St.
Ocean Ave.
Santa Monica
Wilshire Blvd.
2
2
Santa Monica Blvd.
3
Broadway
Colorado Ave.
Olympic Blvd.
10
1
Santa Monica Pier
Pico Blvd.
Ocean Park Blvd.
Santa Monica Airport
Main St.
Rose Ave.
4
Pacific Ave.
5
Abbot Kinney Blvd.
Lincoln Blvd.
Walgrove Ave.
6
Venice Blvd.
187
Venice
Washington Blvd.
7
Admiralty Way
1
Venice Pier
Marina del Rey
Marina del Rey
PACIFIC OCEAN
0
5 mi
0
5 km
N


Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena (Bob Hope) Airport
Hollywood Fwy.
170
North Hollywood
Burbank
Glendale Fwy.
Foothill Fwy.
Pasadena
101
Ventura Fwy.
134
Studio City
Universal City
GRIFFITH PARK
5
Glendale
Glendale Fwy.
2
Eagle Rock
8
San Marino
See Map 3: Hollywood Accommodations, p. 33
South Pasadena
Hollywood
101
Silver Lake/ Los Feliz
110
San Gabriel
Santa Monica Blvd.
Beverly Hills
West Hollywood
Dodger Stadium
Alhambra
San Bernardino Fwy.
Union Station
Historic District
Mid Wilshire
10
Monterey Park
Staples Center
Century City
Santa Monica Fwy.
10
Convention Center
City Center
60
Pomona Fwy.
East Los Angeles
See Map 4: Downtown Accommodations, p. 34
Culver City
LA Coliseum
Exposition Park
Whittier Blvd.
San Diego Fwy.
Fairfax Ave.
Western Ave.
Harbor Fwy.
Maywood
710
Commerce
Santa Ana Fwy.
Huntington Park
Bell
Long Beach Fwy.
Bell Gardens
Inglewood
The Forum
Hollywood Park
Firestone Blvd.
Los Angeles Int'l Airport (LAX)
110
Watts
South Gate
Downey
El Segundo
105
Century Fwy.
405
Sepulveda Blvd.
Hawthorne Blvd.
Compton
Paramount
Gardena
105
Manhattan Beach
Artesia Blvd.
Lawndale
Gardena Fwy.
Hermosa Beach
Torrance
San Diego Fwy.
Redondo Beach
405
Carson
Pacific Coast Hwy.
Lomita
Terminal Fwy.
Palos Verdes Estates
Rolling Hills Estates
Harbor Fwy.
Ocean Blvd.
Rancho Palos Verdes
Rolling Hills
San Pedro
Bissell House 8
Casa Del Mar 3
Casa Malibu 1
Georgian Hotel 3
Hostelling International Santa Monica Hostel 2
Hotel California 3
Hotel Carmel 3
The Inn at Venice Beach 7
Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel 3
Shutters on the Beach 3
Venice Beach Cotel 5
Venice Beach Hostel 6
Venice Beach House 4
The Viceroy 3

Basic Stuff

A hotel can be simply a place to sleep when you need a bed, or it can become a staging area for whole subterranean parts of your personality that need to be visited occasionally in order to keep the rest of you alive. Or dead, it's up to you. But I will declare it a given that you get what you pay for at four-star hotels. It may not always be what you *want,* but that's another story. Conversely, those fleabag no-tell motels may not have a fridge and minibar in the room, but you sure can't complain about the price. (And really, that's not blood on the sheets—more like an ironing burn.)

P.S.: Don't worry about cockroaches. This isn't New York.

Of course, you have a car. Don't you? Not to worry—in locales like Downtown, Melrose/Beverly, WeHo, Hollywood, Santa Monica, Pasadena, Catalina, and Malibu, you can settle in with no wheels and be absolutely pig-in-shit happy, walking to great bars, eating in wildly eccentric ethnic restaurants, maxing out your credit card on unnecessary disposables, perfecting that screenplay pitch, and maybe, just maybe, not catching any STDs.

Winning the Reservations Game

If you're having a hard time getting a room, drop some names, inquire about the distance to the Getty Center for your breakfast meeting, or express skepticism about their security. "There are some very recognizable clients I have to meet with, and I just need to be assured that they won't be harassed." You don't even need to name names; just a *hint* will do.

While Downtown hotels can be jammed, Hollywood is always for sale. Your best bet is to stay in Santa Monica, indicating to everyone that you truly know L.A. and have good taste to boot.

Is There a Right Address?

Is there a right address in L.A.? It all depends on you. The **Millennium Biltmore,** the **Omni, Hilton Checkers,** and the **Los Angeles Athletic Club** are all classy digs for the Downtowner. The **Westin Bonaventure,** on the other hand, is strictly middle-class-conventioneer style, totally functional and adequate for someone who's spending a *lot* of time not in the room. The **Standard Downtown** has gotten a lot of press for its rooftop bar and allows for an easy stumble back to your room. The **Figueroa Hotel** is in a class by itself: retro L.A. without being campy, with a great bar/pool area. In Hollywood, the **Standard, Chateau Marmont, Sunset Marquis,** and **Mondrian** all have high hipster cachet. The **Avalon** and the **Argyle** have loads of character-building back story as well, especially for those who consider the Sunset Strip accommodations to be last month's flavor.

The Lowdown

Wrong side of the freeway, right side of the wallet... Sure, Chinatown's on the wrong side of the 101 Freeway and it's something of a hike from here to Downtown proper, but that's what the bus system is for. At the bottom of the budget list—but still totally acceptable—is the **Royal Pagoda Motel.** At $62 a night (10% less for weekly), this utilitarian little relic is safe, quiet (at least at night), and more-or-less clean. They get bonus points for the lack of Lysol aura.

Sunset Strip joints for the hipeoisie... Hear Belushi giggling in the corner? Welcome to Hollywood's haunted palace, the **Chateau Marmont,** where the ghosts of generations of dead scriptwriters roam angrily in a badly edited purgatory, trying vainly to finish that last rewrite. The Chateau is a cliché, certainly, but it also represents a bit of Hollywood history that every Angeleno visits at least once. On the Strip you'll find the **Mondrian,** one of the Hollywood legends that has managed to reinvent itself for the new century. This 12-story monument to the Dutch painter reeks of wannabe-starfucker mentality, mainly because the Skybar lounge-patio area used to be the tippy-top of the current dung heap of places to be seen with your agent, your client, your producer—anyone but your spouse. On the more reasonably priced side, there's the **Hollywood Metropolitan Hotel & Plaza** on Sunset. No Starck pretense here, just clean rooms and a good location. Don't forget the famous **West Hollywood Hyatt,** known for years as the Riot House (or sometimes the Riot Hyatt), back in the days when touring rock-'n'-roll superstars would routinely trash their rooms and drive their motorcycles through the hallways; these days the Hyatt draws the music-industry-executive crowd, who appreciate its proximity to the House of

Blues, its corporate cookie-cutter ambience (despite the Art Deco–esque lobby), and that bland familiarity of a big hotel chain. The ghosts of former hipsters—crazy cats like Montgomery Clift and Errol Flynn—are said to roam their old Hollywood haunt, the Roosevelt, now the **Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel,** a well-maintained, spacious compound right across from the Chinese Theater. If you don't know a thing about Hollywood, not even where to park, come here. It's the easiest and best choice in the neighborhood. Finally, down from Sunset, on a tree-lined street, is the **Sunset Marquis Hotel and Villas,** popular with celebrities, rock stars, and New York magazine editors vacationing on the corporate tit. Remarkably, it's weathered every change that's swept through Hollywood without ever losing its appeal.

Convention-al choices with unconventional style... When there's a convention in town, the Downtown hotels always book up quickly, even gargantuan ones like the **Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites,** with its nearly 1,400 (small) rooms. The 35th-floor restaurant, Top of Five, has a spectacular 360-degree view of downtown, while one floor below it the Bonavista Bar slowly rotates, adding a nice disorientation to the evening. Even if you don't stay here, ride the exterior elevators. Ever wanted to have sex in an elevator? This is the place to go, especially if you have an exhibitionist streak. Just a few blocks away stands the **Millennium Biltmore Hotel.** It simply doesn't get much grander than this: The decor mixes European elegance and Italian Renaissance, with some Spanish and Moorish folderol thrown in for spice. The place feels more like a church than a hotel, and it can be a humbling experience just walking through the lobby. The hotel recently had a 75th birthday, but you'd never know it, thanks to constant guest-room rehabs. Right across the street from the Biltmore is the **Hilton Checkers Hotel.** Compared with the massive blocks of steel and glass all around it, the Hilton Checkers seems like a transplant from some other, much smaller and more genteel city. It's deliciously civilized and chock-full of very pricey and tasteful art and antiques. Bonus points for the in-house Checkers Restaurant on the ground floor. Wrapped in bougainvillea and accented by succulents and cacti, the **Figueroa Hotel** is a

FOR HEALTH NUTS

If you really want to scratch that jock itch, there's always the legendary ***Los Angeles Athletic Club,*** *in the heart of the Financial District and the oldest private club in the city, established in 1880. Charlie Chaplin was a member, as was Rudolph Valentino. Since 1912 (when the current structure was built), club members have won more than 100 Olympic medals. The club boasts an Olympic-size pool, tournament-quality courts of all kinds, every high-tech weight machine imaginable, spas, workout classes, and more.*

Los Angeles hotel that is proud of its heritage, from the high-ceilinged bedrooms to the tasteful-yet-seductive Moorish-Mexican flavor of the lobby areas. Despite its age the hotel has been well maintained, and the arrival of the Staples Center, right across the street, has energized the neighborhood.

Bunking on Bunker Hill... Thirty years ago Bunker Hill was a kind of no-man's land of anonymous office high-rises. Then MOCA moved here, the teeny funicular railway Angel's Flight was resurrected, and the Water Court began hosting free public concerts all summer long. The area's star is the **Omni Hotel,** a $100-million landmark that is one of L.A.'s most notable and prestigious hotels. With nearly 450 rooms, this cousin to San Francisco's Mark Hopkins Hotel (also owned by InterContinental) is where top CEOs and visiting dignitaries stay when they're in town to visit the company headquarters in Library Tower or to hold talks with City Hall.

Boardwalk daze... Who can explain the appeal of Venice? It's got the weirdos on the boardwalk, the bums on the sand, the scummy cream that covers the water of the canals, and the ducks and gulls defecating and fornicating in wild abandon. And we watch it all, hypnotized and passive, like toilet paper going down the bowl in a swirl of water, headed for the sewer, but loving every minute of it. My advice? Don't fight it—some people are just meant to be in Venice. They stay at **The Inn at Venice Beach,** which is less an inn than a newly remodeled generic motel, all plastic and stucco and sterile. A much better choice (if you can get a reservation) is the two-story, cozy, homey **Venice**

Beach House. Book this one way in advance, sight unseen. You won't be sorry.

The international hostel experience... Ever wondered where the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce stashes its WMDs? Well, if olfactory signals are any hint, they're sequestered somewhere on the premises of the **Hollywood International Hostel,** located right across the street from the glitzy Kodak Theatre Hollywood/Highland complex. This is as close to a European-style squat as one can find in the new Hollywood, but who cares? It's all about location—and no curfew. Those who are severely short on cash may be able to work out a deal with the management, trading labor for a night's bed. The **Hostelling International Santa Monica Hostel** is probably the best address for the committed backpacker whose vision of Los Angeles is based on *Baywatch* reruns. Located in the heart of Santa Monica, this AYH facility is sparkling clean, safe, and the Travel Centre next door has all the basics a foreign visitor might have forgotten. Also geared to the international traveler, on "historic" Orchid Avenue in Hollywood, is the **Liberty Hotel,** where you can feel welcome in the $15-a-night dorm rooms, or throw for your own special private room reeking of Lysol. Between the Saltillo-tiled floors, cottage-cheese ceilings, and cheap chandeliers, the overall ambience is like something out of a Bukowski story. **Banana Bungalow** is another "international" hostel in Hollywood, located in a slightly quieter neighborhood, right off the Cahuenga Pass portion of the Hollywood Freeway but shielded from that sight by lots of vegetation. That, plus a rustic tropical motif-style "club room," makes this a much more acceptable choice for the backpacker set. Included: breakfast of toast, coffee, or tea, as well as use of a pool, pool table, weight room, and "library" where you can escape from your dorm mates. The **Venice Beach Cotel** hostel is about as close to the sands at Venice as you can get. It's cheap, clean, safe, and open 24 hours a day—your roommates might be backpackers from Germany or a local Venice Boardwalk street performer. There are only 30 rooms, most of them with four beds and a full bath, although both coed and private rooms can also be arranged. ***One caveat:*** If you have an issue with privacy or dealing with strangers, you probably shouldn't bother. For the rest of you, bring your earplugs.

Upscale homes near the homeless... Harry Shearer, voice of Principal Skinner (among others) on *The Simpsons* and host of NPR's *Le Show,* christened Santa Monica "The Home of the Homeless," and indeed mobs of them troll the areas surrounding the **Georgian Hotel.** Perched right on Ocean Avenue and overlooking the pier and Santa Monica Beach, this is one of the last grande dames of European-style beach hotels in Santa Monica. The suites are all unique, the views are spectacular, and the location is perfect. Toss in the classic 1933 Art Deco design and you've got just the right place to meet your grandmother for high tea, served every afternoon.

Beach bums and beauties... When it opened in 1993, **Shutters on the Beach** was the belle of the beach, but now the Botox is wearing off. The cheapest of the 198 rooms starts at $360 and rates rocket skyward to $3,000 for one of the 12 deluxe cottagelike suites. It's the kind of place where they make it a point to let you know they don't *need* your money. That's okay, you don't *need* to stay here, either. **Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel** is also close to the beach; just cross the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) and those pesky homeless. The cavernous atrium in the lobby is the highlight of the place. There are truly fab ocean views in the higher-priced rooms, but even the "partial views" will give you the full effect. You must stop in to sample some foie gras with cranberries, the crisped salmon or venison, and the lavender-flavored ice cream at Lavande, the hoity-toity Provençal restaurant downstairs. The **Hotel Carmel,** another '20s-era Santa Monica facility near the beach, is a big hit with foreign tourists and entertainment-industry types. The restored Art Deco lobby boasts some wonderful carved columns along with a cozy fireplace area. It's one of the better deals in the area and is considered a "Santa Monica secret" by local rags. Bonus points for the amazingly comfy mattresses. The folks at the **Hotel California** in Santa Monica don't pretend to be The Eagles' inspiration (the photo on the original album was actually of the Beverly Hills Hotel), but lots of tourists still come here for pictures in front of the hotel sign. What could say "L.A." more than that? In reality, though, this is not the place for jaded self-indulgence. The hotel doesn't even allow smoking in the rooms, for example. It's located in a pleasant, Spanish-style stucco building with a tile roof and has a very pleasant inner courtyard shaded by banana and Mexican fan palms that is totally ripe with the smell of night-blooming jasmine. Just up the road is the **Casa Malibu,** where Lana Turner supposedly camped out. This "Inn on the Beach" successfully integrates a well-kept hominess with a low-key discreet romantic atmosphere—perfect for private interludes.

The royal treatment... Feeling regal and is price no object? The latest in high-concept/high-visibility is the refurbished **Viceroy Santa Monica,** skimming the cream of Hollywood celebs and dumping them into their very own poolside cabanas. Smarmy attitude comes gratis, as does the dim lighting that hides the fading effects of your last Botox injection. Marble baths, soaking tubs, T1 Internet access, and ocean views make this a hotel where the VIP list starts with the concierge desk. The Cameo Bar is for off-screen cameos of names like Fran Drescher, Matthew Perry, and local wacko Dennis Hopper. The Hollywood and Highland makeover is dominated by the **Renaissance Hollywood,** a gargantuan phoenix reborn out of the ashes of a former Holiday Inn. Wraparound vistas, Eames chairs, and Noguchi and Platner tables throughout. There's even a revolving restaurant on the top floor. Those with *beaucoup* bucks will set up shop in the four-bedroom 3,000-square-foot Panorama Suite, which, for five-large, comes complete with baby grand, cork floor, motorized drapes, and seating for 10. From the stewardess-style uniforms of the snotty staff to the fake topiary in the rooftop bar, the **Standard Downtown** is another address of the moment. It's the inner-city sister of the painfully hip Sunset Strip hot spot and is so self-consciously whimsical it might set your teeth on edge. The retro-Jetsons-esque furniture, bar-code wall decor, blue AstroTurf, and primary colors are seductively fanciful and maybe just enough of a diversion that you won't mind sharing the sidewalk with the crackheads and crazies cruising down to the flophouses of Skid Row, six blocks south. ***And take note:*** It *is* the scene on the roof, 12 stories up, where the Standard really shines—live DJs, an overheated pool, campy films screened onto neighboring walls, and a pigeon's-eye view of L.A.'s Downtown skyscrapers. (***Escape Artist's Tip:*** If you're impatient with the wait for the sluggish rooftop elevator, take the stairs down one level where there's a bank of four.)

And the "Dorian Gray Slept Here Award" goes to... The 129-room **Casa Del Mar** was a Hollywood favorite in the '20s and '30s but turned into a '90s eyesore. A $60-million clock-rewinding face-lift puts it back on the map: We're talking wooden Venetian blinds, bathrooms of white Italian Calacata marble, silver leaf over white porcelain, pedestal sinks, wicker, chintz, damask and velvet drapes, fruitwood tones. The result can be sterile and museum-like, chilly even in the toasty glow of the setting sun, but the views are major, from Palos Verdes to Malibu. ***Be warned:*** This place is designed with high rollers in mind, the folks who are dropping $3,500 on one of the suites. The little folk may find their room service comes cold.

And in second place... From the outside there's little intriguing about the white-brick facade of **Maison 140,** other than the fact that it's on Lasky Drive, in Beverly Hills—which by itself is a quirky street. Inside, however, every one of the four floors boasts a different color and textural theme, bursts of sensuality framed within an almost camp vision of colonial decadence: Oriental reds, pagoda-print wallpaper, four-poster beds, and French crystal chandeliers. Every one of the 45 rooms is done up differently, customized with vintage and one-of-a-kind touches. What else would you expect from a Bev Hills B&B, especially one that was once the home of silent-film star Lillian Gish? Maison 140 is run by the po-mo hipsters who own the **Avalon** (p. 36), so the Net access is high-speed, they'll rent you a local cellphone, and if you have to do the spa-pool thing, you can hop over to the Avalon and use the facilities gratis.

Escape to Catalina Island... If you really want a taste of that mythical California of the past, when there were more drive-ins than drive-bys and there was only one area code for L.A., come on out to Catalina Island, just a few hours by boat from Long Beach. There are a variety of places to stay here, but the ones with the most charm date from the '50s. The **Hotel Villa Portofino** is a recently renovated, three-story European-style resort with great balcony and sun-deck views of Avalon Bay. It caters to couples, but some people actually come here just for the food in the restaurant. While it isn't as cheap as many places on the island, if you're here midweek in midwinter, you'll find rooms starting at around $65. The **Pavilion Lodge** is right on the water but lacks the intimacy of the Portofino. Still, the garden courtyard that dominates the center of the facility is a welcome relief from the endless sun and salt. It's more of a self-enclosed experience, perfect for aging CEOs to take their trophy wives to for a second honeymoon. Bonus points for letting kids under 11 stay for free with their parents and for labeling all king-size bedrooms as smokers. While Wrigley's mansion up on Mount Ida has the most spectacular view on Catalina (see below), the **Hotel Metropole** is the island's most luxurious. Originally built in 1888, the rebuilt hotel has had a complete makeover that stays true to the 1920s sensibility of the original, with rooms that offer a degree of comfort one could easily pay double for just across the water in Santa Monica.

Want to pretend you're William Randolph Hearst? Since you can't stay at Hearst Castle in San Simeon, the Santa Catalina home of chewing-gum magnate William Wrigley, Jr., is an excellent second choice. The house, built in 1921, is now known as the **Inn on Mount Ada** and sits on a perch 350 feet above Avalon Harbor, where you can catch the earliest morning sun and the last afternoon rays.

B&Bs in Pasadena... Around the turn of the 20th century, Pasadena was where snooty Easterners could come to savor the climate, the ubiquitous bouquet of orange blossoms, and the sight of stoop labor working the fields. Some sense of this ambience still exists in South Pasadena, especially in a tree-lined section once known as "Millionaires Row." The houses here are Victorian, and one of the best restored is the **Bissell House.** This bed-and-breakfast has only five rooms, but in each room you get a vision of gracious So Cal living at its old-money best: gabled ceilings, chintz, antique beds, marble sinks, claw-foot tubs, and no graffiti anywhere. Fairly nearby is the **Artist's Inn and Cottage,** a Victorian-era B&B with 10 suites, including Jacuzzis, fireplaces, lots of art, and excellent food. One guest, a 75-year-old woman, recently came by for 4 nights, even though she lived just three blocks away. It's that kind of place.

Hotels for finishing your screenplay... Sure, your script is "in the works," but your agent wanted it yesterday. The solution? Hermit like Howard Hughes and hammer out your magnum opus from a writer's hideaway. Those on the studio dime get stashed at the **Chateau Marmont.** However, less well-connected hacks bang out their words between Beverly Hills and the bourgeoisie at the **Wyndham Bel Age** just off the Sunset Strip. The homey suites have an apartment feel, decked out with a living room with couch and coffee table, a minibar, and an office area that boasts ergonomically correct Herman Miller desk chairs for when you actually start working. Of course, if the muse has left, maybe she's hanging out at the Viper Room or at the Whisky, both a simple drunk stumble away. Room service is as quick as you will be at three in the morning on 10 cups of coffee. Melodramas and romance novelists (with large advances) will find their G spot at the **Sofitel Ma Maison Hotel,** where the flowery country decor looks like Laura Ashley on speed meets post-incarceration Martha Stewart. The plush pillow-top beds are conducive to hours of emotional writing about that one day in Paris with Pierre by the Seine, and the balloon curtains and antiqued faux furniture suggest *grandmere* will bring you breakfast in the morning. The highly prolific westerns writer Zane Grey discovered his personal haven when he came to Catalina Island, 26 miles off the coast, and in 1926 built the rambling **Zane Grey Pueblo Hotel** overlooking the Avalon Harbor. This is probably the most delightful experience a writer on a budget could imagine (as low as $59 per night, low season). Great views, clean air, zero traffic sounds, and absolutely no diversions. If you can't complete your manuscript here, then maybe you should go back to copywriting.

Icons of Beverly Hills... They call the **Beverly Hills Hotel** the Pink Palace, as much for the decor as the implied sexual innuendo. Here you'll encounter the culture of Beverly Hills under glass: The place has nearly 200 guest rooms, the Polo Lounge, the pool, the cabanas, and marble bathrooms, all surrounded by 12 acres in which to stroll and make naughty. It doesn't get much better than this, nor should it. Room prices run from $300 to $3,600 a night, but who's counting pennies? This is Beverly Hills! If you can't afford to stay here, at least come by for a snack at the Fountain Coffee Shop. Or enjoy the afternoon tea in the lobby, and watch people not married to each other check in with no luggage. All in all, the mid-'90s renovation was worth it. The same can't be said for **Lowell's** (formerly L'Ermitage), which had a $65-million facelift, tummy tuck, and boob job, but is mostly notable for its rooftop pool. This hotel works well for reclusive superstars—people who want to have their privacy but also want to be close to really prime shopping. The rooms are hiply minimalist but rely a little too much on presentation and not enough on taste—kind of like the food in the hotel restaurant. And now to **The Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel,** an ever-popular movie location *(Pretty Woman, Beverly Hills Cop),* and a former home-away-from-home for Elvis, John Lennon, Warren Beatty, the Aga Khan, Emperor Hirohito, the Windsors, and even the Dalai Lama. The lobby is white marble, the elevator doors are richly carved brown wood, and jackets are required in the restaurants.

Slums of Beverly Hills

Local Realtors have a term for it: Beverly Hills Adjacent. That means it's close enough to the action to imagine that you're a player. That's why you're staying at the ***Carlyle Inn,*** *a small, 32-room boutique hotel used by Fox and Sony to put up visiting directors and actors—so you know it's not too expensive, and almost prestigious. You get a full breakfast to go with the open-air spa, sun deck, and free wine in the afternoon. Whoopee!*

Gay gay gay... West Hollywood is L.A.'s newest city, just a few minutes from the Melrose shopping zoo, Beverly Hills, the Sunset Strip, and Hollywood. It's also probably the largest gay enclave in California outside of San Francisco—but you knew that. Totally in the WeHo mood is **Le Montrose Suite Hotel.** Oooooh-la-la—this is more like it! The place is on a quiet residential street and is so fabulous that it has an astounding 89% return rate. You get fruit and mineral water when you arrive and cookies and milk when you leave. Also sunken living rooms, twice-daily maid service, scales in the bathroom, even in-suite Nintendo! In a similar vein, just west of La Cienega Boulevard on a pleasantly quiet street, is **Le Parc Suite Hotel,** another gay-friendly and excellently run facility. Music-industry big shots who like to keep their private life out of the tabloids come here to unwind in one of the 154 suites, each with a fireplace, patio, kitchenette, and sunken living room. Over in the world of corporate chain hotels, it doesn't get much more gay-friendly than the **Ramada Plaza.** The WeHo outlet, with its 176 rooms and "elegant" lofts, was named Inn of the Year in 1999 (best out of 1,000 Ramadas). Personally I think this venue rates serious consideration simply because it contains a Du-Par's (a local mini-mini-chain coffeehouse that's been around 50 years). If you have any questions about where to go in WeHo, the staff is knowledgeable about the 20 gay clubs and lounges and 130 gay-friendly restaurants nearby. The much homier and low-key **Holloway Motel** benefits from not being right in the middle of the WeHo chaos: You can easily walk to the center of Boys Town, but you can also get away from it when you go home. If you're on a budget, check out the kitchenettes. If cruising naked bodies by the pool is your idea of a noon well spent, then consider the **San Vicente Inn Resort,** a fairly convincing facsimile of an enclosed Palm Springs gay resort right in the heart of the city. Try to score one of the suites or cottages with private entrances to the various decks and patios scattered around the complex. There's also a small gym, Roman showers, a steam room, and a 10-person hot tub. Throw in the clothing-optional sun deck and you've got all you need for a completely wicked weekend.

East beats West... For a reasonably priced car-less stay in Downtown, you can't beat the **Miyako Hotel Los Angeles** in Little Tokyo. They went through a remodeling in 2004 but didn't really jack up their rates much—$134 for a standard room for two. DSL in most rooms, Wi-Fi in the executive suites, and, best of all, the in-house spa complete with shiatsu massage. Around the corner is the grande dame of Little Tokyo, the **New Otani.** There are three great restaurants, T1 wired access in all rooms ($10 daily charge), and the Sanwa Spa with shiatsu and deep oil massages. The best feature of the New Otani, however, is the third-floor Garden in the Sky, a half-acre mini-re-creation of a historic 400-year-old garden in the Tokyo New Otani. It's not Tokyo but it's close.

Miracle miler... Not so long ago, before the '90s riots, Miracle Mile was where film crews would come to illustrate the demise of L.A.'s inner city—the massive, decaying apartment buildings that defined the nonsuburban landscape. Well, thank you very much, but the Miracle Mile is back. The fact that you can also now get great *bulgolgi* from any number of Korean restaurants in the neighborhood is gravy—which is the main reason why I like the **Orlando Hotel** so much. It's not really located on the Miracle Mile itself, but just to the south, on the much more pleasant Beverly Boulevard. The Orlando is a boutique hotel, with 98 oversize rooms, a swimming pool in the garden, and, remarkably, complimentary taxi service anywhere inside a 5-mile radius—a zone that stretches from the Greek Theater to Rodeo Drive, Hollywood, and the Sunset Strip.

Smells like roach spray, tastes like Marilyn... Marilyn Monroe supposedly lived on Orchid Avenue—thus its claim to some sort of "historic" status. There are deals to be had on Orchid, like the **Hollywood Celebrity Hotel,** built in the '80s but not aging well at all. It's decorated in that bad Reagan-era Art Deco/Nouveau style, with murals of old-time Hollywood stars thrown in to add some sense of history. *The Hotel* was filmed here, a major feature film that has never been released. It, like the sadly named Celebrity, coulda been a contender. Today the place is just a down-at-the-heels version of the Roosevelt, with too many mirrors and those grotesque, obligatory star portraits everywhere. You can get a pass to the Magic Castle here though, and there's also free car service to Universal Studios and a free, full continental breakfast served in your room. The nearby **Hollywood Orchid Suites** is substantially better, but still nothing to write home about. It has larger rooms, suitable for a family, with full kitchens. There's also a nice little swimming pool from which you can watch the gentrification of the neighborhood. Who's in the pool? A stage mother from Finland in town for her daughter's Broadway dance classes, a Goth babe in black lipstick, and a befuddled-looking Japanese guitarist.

***Très* snotty...** Run by the Chateau Marmont people across the street, the **Standard** features what they refer to as "midcentury decor" ('50s and '60s modern to you, stupid). For paying too much money at this retro monstrosity, you get beanbag chairs and shag carpet on the ceiling. The pool area, with its deep blue AstroTurf that matches the rather tiny pool, is quite fabulous, as is the desk "aquarium," which houses a real live human in the pm. Don't feel bad if you have to wait 45 minutes to get someone to talk to you—it's all part of the elitist Hollywood thing, man. One step behind Gen-X is Gen-W, where at the **W Westwood** hotel in Westwood, the young hoteliers' motto of "whatever, whenever" shows more negatively in their lackadaisical and stuck-up approach to service—think high school snub clique that you're paying to serve you years after you've moved on to relative success and it was either the hotel or the gas station for them. But at least now they've gone high-tech bouncer with their head-to-toe black it's-cool-to-work-here camouflage (no, really) and wireless headsets. The best part of the W besides the dressed-to-impress Westside upper-crusters at the hotel's Whiskey Blue Bar is the frosted-glass waterfall entrance that gives the illusion of walking on water. Just remember, though: You don't, and they're not afraid to let you know it.

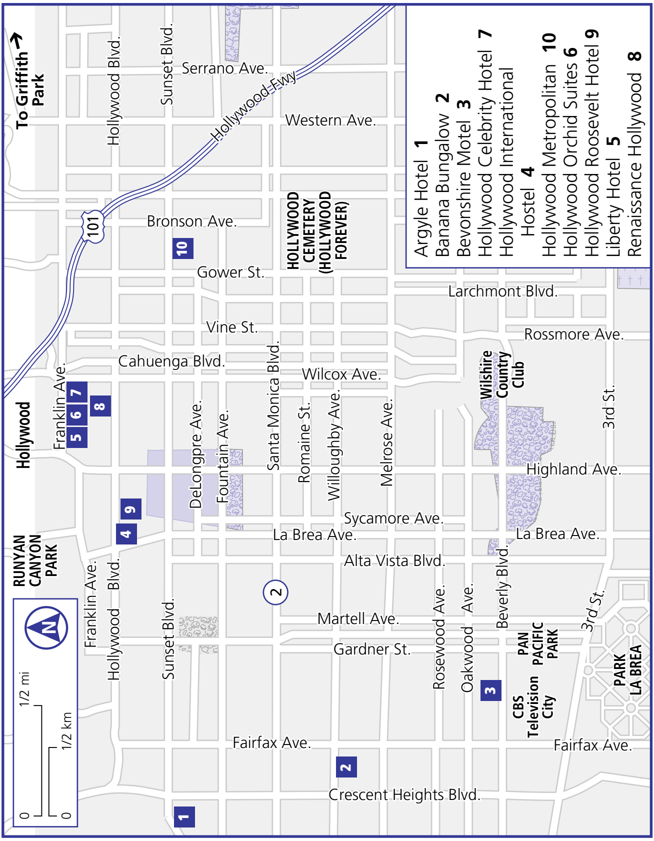
Anti-*très* snotty... Now if you want the *real* "midcentury" feeling, the **Beverly Laurel Hotel** is the one for you. As welcoming as the Standard is alienating (the unloading driveway curves around a pool in the center of the hotel), it's been a location for numerous fashion shoots (starring Kate Moss). Its clean, comfortable rooms have cool diamond-print bedspreads, half and full kitchens containing all those '50s touches, and mosaic-tiled balconies. All this and the welcoming staff make this a hip, reasonable place to stay. Bonus points for Swingers Café next door (open until 4am), where you can get a groovy breakfast or lunch (okay, and a little bit of attitude).

Another midcentury marvel... For you cool cats who are addicted to the TV Land channel, check out the **Avalon,** a retro reminder of swinging motels from some imaginary L.A. past, when Cricket lounged by the pool while Kookie played hep-cat beats on the bongos. Formerly the Beverly Carlton, the Avalon was redone in 1998, adding all the nice modern touches you'd expect but with a suitably ironic tone. Amenities include a pool, a gym, faxes in every one of the 88 rooms, and completely delightful '50s-style furnishings. Bonus for *I Love Lucy* fans: All the "Lucy in Hollywood" episodes were shot here.

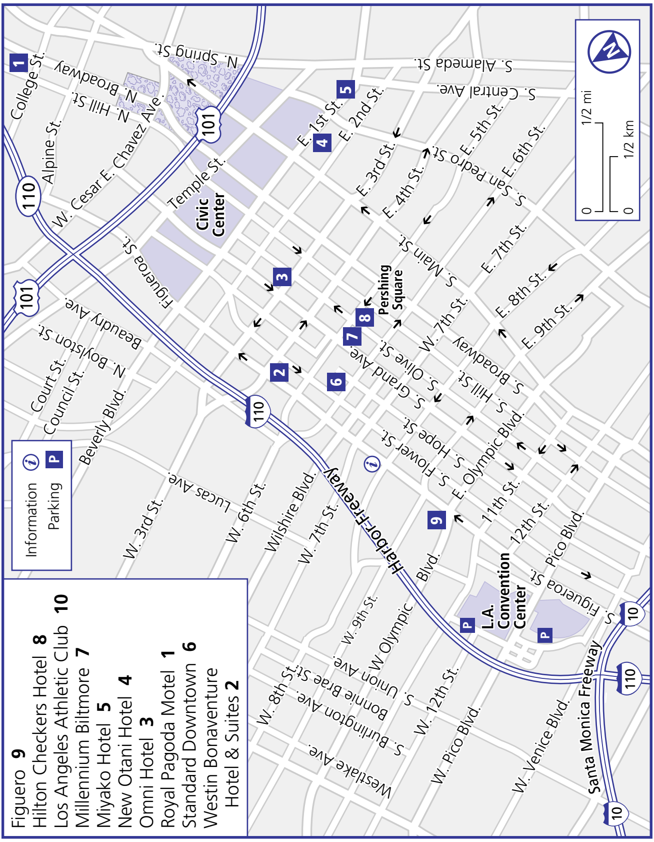
Classic views... The 15-story Art Deco **Argyle Hotel** sits high on the ridge of the Sunset Strip and offers one of the best panoramas of the city. The interior landscape isn't bad either, with 64 drop-dead-gorgeous rooms. The hotel was built in 1927 and became a playground for the likes of Errol Flynn and (of course) Marilyn Monroe. It was reincarnated as the St. James Club for a while, a stupidly haughty "private" establishment, but has now returned to its commoner roots—although there is still something of an attitude about the place. It's hard not to feel privileged with that view. ***Major bonus point:*** The 24-hour room-service food comes from the Fenix Restaurant, a supertrendy French-Asian-California fusion slop house on the ground floor.

The price is right... isn't it? Please?... Once upon a time, one-quarter of the clientele at the **Farmer's Daughter Motel** (so named because of its proximity to the Hollywood Farmer's Market) were contestants on *The Price Is Right,* filmed right across the street at CBS Studios. Then it was a ratty, nondescript, vinyl-wallpapered fleabag. But the place got a full-frontal makeover recently, tits to zits, and now it's hipster-friendly, squeaky-clean, and oozing irony. Then there's the **Bevonshire Motel,** another clean, characterless-yet-serviceable motel with a tiny, sunless swimming pool that you'll never enter. Kudos for the bulletproof glass in the lobby—it really adds to the ambience. Is the place safe? Is life safe? Hey, you could get killed crossing the street; for these prices, who cares? For an extra $6 per night, you can get a kitchenette.

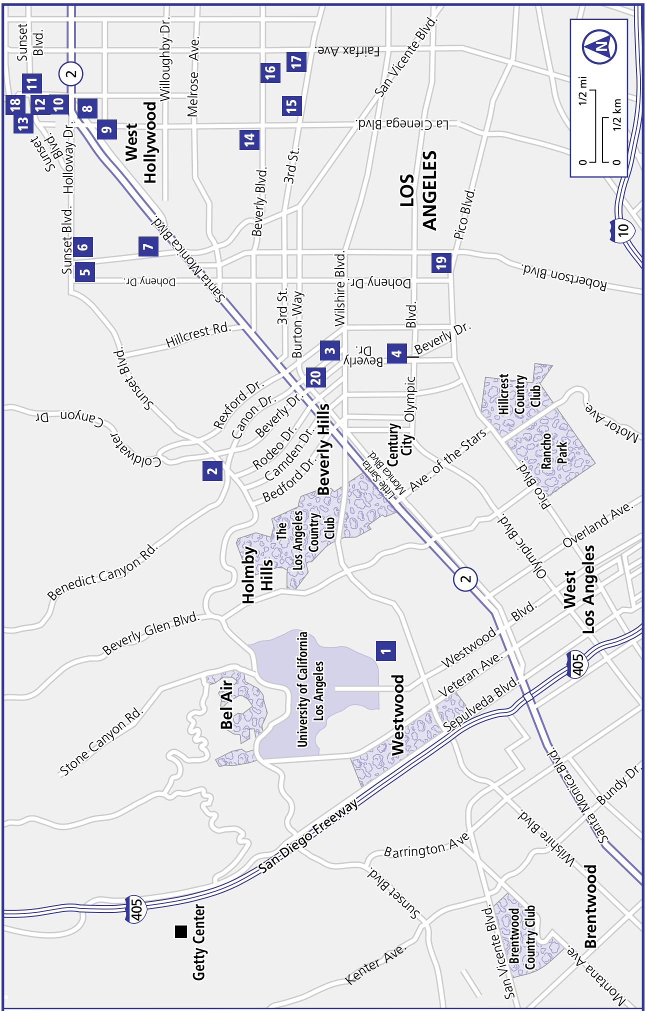
Map 3: Hollywood Accommodations


Argyle Hotel 1
Banana Bungalow 2
Bevonshire Motel 3
Hollywood Celebrity Hotel 7
Hollywood International Hostel 4
Hollywood Metropolitan 10
Hollywood Orchid Suites 6
Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel 9
Liberty Hotel 5
Renaissance Hollywood 8
To Griffith Park
Hollywood
RUNYAN CANYON PARK
HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY (HOLLYWOOD FOREVER)
Wilshire Country Club
PAN PACIFIC PARK
CBS Television City
PARK LA BREA
Hollywood Fwy
101
Hollywood Blvd.
Sunset Blvd.
Serrano Ave.
Western Ave.
Bronson Ave.
Gower St.
Larchmont Blvd.
Vine St.
Rossmore Ave.
Cahuenga Blvd.
Wilcox Ave.
Franklin Ave.
DeLongpre Ave.
Fountain Ave.
Santa Monica Blvd.
Romaine St.
Willoughby Ave.
Melrose Ave.
3rd St.
Highland Ave.
Sycamore Ave.
La Brea Ave.
Alta Vista Blvd.
Martell Ave.
Gardner St.
Rosewood Ave.
Oakwood Ave.
Beverly Blvd.
Fairfax Ave.
Crescent Heights Blvd.
2
N
0
1/2 mi
1/2 km

Map 4: Downtown Accommodations


Figueroa 9
Hilton Checkers Hotel 8
Los Angeles Athletic Club 10
Millennium Biltmore 7
Miyako Hotel 5
New Otani Hotel 4
Omni Hotel 3
Royal Pagoda Motel 1
Standard Downtown 6
Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites 2
Information
Parking
0
1/2 mi
0
1/2 km
Civic Center
Pershing Square
L.A. Convention Center
College St.
Alpine St.
N. Broadway
N. Hill St.
N. Spring St.
W. Cesar E. Chavez Ave.
Temple St.
Figueroa St.
Beaudry Ave.
Boylston St.
N. Boylston St.
Court St.
Council St.
Beverly Blvd.
W. 3rd St.
Lucas Ave.
W. 6th St.
Wilshire Blvd.
W. 7th St.
Harbor Freeway
W. 9th St.
W. Olympic Blvd.
W. 8th St.
S. Bonnie Brae St.
Union Ave.
Bonnie Brae St.
S. Burlington Ave.
Westlake Ave.
W. 12th St.
W. Pico Blvd.
W. Venice Blvd.
Santa Monica Freeway
S. Alameda St.
S. Central Ave.
E. 1st St.
E. 2nd St.
E. 3rd St.
E. 4th St.
S. San Pedro St.
E. 5th St.
E. 6th St.
S. Main St.
E. 7th St.
W. 7th St.
E. 8th St.
E. 9th St.
S. Broadway
S. Hill St.
S. Olive St.
S. Grand Ave.
S. Hope St.
S. Flower St.
E. Olympic Blvd.
11th St.
12th St.
Pico Blvd.
S. Figueroa St.
101
110
10
P

Map 5: L.A.'s Westside & Beverly Hills Accommodations


Sunset Blvd.
Holloway Dr.
Sunset Blvd.
Willoughby Dr.
Melrose Ave.
West Hollywood
Fairfax Ave.
San Vicente Blvd.
La Cienega Blvd.
Beverly Blvd.
3rd St.
Santa Monica Blvd.
Doheny Dr.
Hillcrest Rd.
Burton Way
Wilshire Blvd.
LOS ANGELES
Pico Blvd.
Robertson Blvd.
Beverly Dr.
Olympic Blvd.
Sunset Blvd.
Coldwater Canyon Dr.
Rexford Dr.
Canon Dr.
Beverly Dr.
Rodeo Dr.
Camden Dr.
Bedford Dr.
Beverly Hills
Century City
Little Santa Monica Blvd.
Ave. of the Stars
Hillcrest Country Club
Rancho Park
Motor Ave.
Benedict Canyon Rd.
Holmby Hills
The Los Angeles Country Club
Olympic Blvd.
Overland Ave.
West Los Angeles
Beverly Glen Blvd.
University of California Los Angeles
Westwood Blvd.
Veteran Ave.
Sepulveda Blvd.
Bel Air
Westwood
Stone Canyon Rd.
San Diego Freeway
Santa Monica Blvd.
Bundy Dr.
Wilshire Blvd.
Barrington Ave.
Sunset Blvd.
Getty Center
Kenter Ave.
San Vicente Blvd.
Brentwood Country Club
Brentwood
Montana Ave.
405
10
2
N
0 1/2 mi
0 1/2 km
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20

Avalon	**4**
Beverly Hills Hotel	**2**
Beverly Laurel Hotel	**16**
Carlyle Inn	**19**
Chateau Marmont	**18**
Farmer's Daughter Motel	**17**
Le Montrose Suite Hotel	**5**
Le Parc Suite Hotel	**9**
Maison 140	**20**
Mondrian	**12**
Orlando Hotel	**15**
Ramada Plaza	**8**
Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel	**3**
San Vicente Inn Resort	**7**
Sofitel Ma Maison Hotel	**14**
Standard	**11**

Do Not
Disturb

The Index

$$$$$$	Sky's the limit
$$$$$	$550–$1,000
$$$$	$350–$550
$$$	$200–$350
$$	$100–$200
$	Under $100

Price ratings are based on the lowest price quoted for a standard double room in high season, including taxes and charges. Unless otherwise noted, rooms have air-conditioning, phones, private baths, and TVs.

The following abbreviations are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express
DC	Diners Club
DISC	Discover
MC	MasterCard
V	Visa

Argyle Hotel (p. 19) WEST HOLLYWOOD One of those special L.A. landmarks that could only exist in the City of Lost Angels. Wonderful Art Deco touches everywhere you look. And it's on the Strip.... *Tel 323/654-7100 (U.S. toll-free number 800/225-2637). www.argylehotel.com. 8358 Sunset Blvd., 90069. 64 rooms. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 3 on p. 33.

Artist's Inn and Cottage (p. 26) SOUTH PASADENA Packed with antiques and nice art, you'd never guess that this stately Victorian was once home to a thriving chicken farm. It was tastefully restored in 1989. South Pas living at its turn-of-the-20th-century best.... *Tel 626/799-5668 (U.S. toll-free number 888/799-5668). www.artistsinns.com. 1038 Magnolia St., 91030. 10 suites. AE, MC, V. $$–$$$*

Avalon (p. 19) BEVERLY HILLS From its Noguchi-style elevator to the George Nelson geometric bubble lamps, the Avalon has got to be one of the best boutique visual delights in the city.... *Tel 310/277-5221 (U.S. toll-free number 800/535-4715). www.avalonbeverlyhills.com/premises/blueonblue. 9400 W. Olympic Blvd., 90212. 86 rooms. AE, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Banana Bungalow **(p. 22)** WEST HOLLYWOOD If you've got no money at all, and the choice is between staying at this hostel or selling your ass down on Hollywood Boulevard...well, it's a toss-up, I'd say.... *Tel 323/655-1510. 2775 Cahuenga Blvd., 90068. 35 rooms, 15 of them private. MC, V. $*

See Map 3 on p. 33.

Beverly Hills Hotel **(p. 27)** BEVERLY HILLS The Polo Lounge, the cabanas, the endless parade of celebrities...it's just so wonderfully fabulous and part of the glory that is, and will always be, Beverly Hills.... *Tel 310/276-2251 (U.S. toll-free number 800/283-8885). www.thebeverlyhillshotel.com. 9641 Sunset Blvd., 90210. 203 rooms, 53 of them in the bungalow section. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Beverly Laurel Hotel **(p. 31)** WEST HOLLYWOOD This cozy, cheapish WeHo hotel delivers a friendly vibe from the staff and a subdued decor and attitude. Recommended highly.... *Tel 323/651-2441. 8018 Beverly Blvd., 90048. 52 rooms. AE, DC, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Bevonshire Motel **(p. 32)** LOS ANGELES It's clean and will do in a pinch if you can't find anywhere else nearby. Zero character—but maybe that describes you as well.... *Tel 323/936-6154. 7575 Beverly Blvd., 90048. 24 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $*

See Map 3 on p. 33.

Bissell House **(p. 26)** SOUTH PASADENA This charming six-room Victorian is perfect for trysting lovers or honeymooners.... *Tel 626/441-3535 (U.S. toll-free number 800/441-3530). www.bissellhouse.com. 201 Orange Grove Ave., 91030. 5 rooms. AE, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Carlyle Inn **(p. 28)** BEVERLY HILLS Close to the heart of Beverly Hills but nowhere near as pricey, this is the perfect choice when you want to be Westside central without busting your budget.... *Tel 310/275-4445. www.carlyle-inn.com. 1119 S. Robertson Blvd., 90035. 32 rooms. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Casa Del Mar **(p. 25)** SANTA MONICA This queen of the Santa Monica boardwalk is again a major player in the beachside resort scene.... *Tel 310/581-5533. Fax 310/581-5503. www.hotelcasadelmar.com. 1910 Ocean Way, 90405. 129 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Casa Malibu **(p. 24)** MALIBU Okay, it's not really a casa in the Mexican sense of the word, and it's not actually in the Colony—but the price is right.... *Tel 310/456-2219 (U.S. toll-free number*

800/831-0858). 22752 Pacific Coast Hwy., 90265. 21 rooms. AE, MC, V. $–$$$

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Chateau Marmont **(p. 19)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Since 1929 this faux-Normandy castle sequestered above the Sunset Strip has been the perfect hideaway for blocked writers and actors desiring to keep a low profile.... *Tel 323/656-1010 (U.S. toll-free number 800/CHATEAU). Fax 323/655-5311. www.chateaumarmont.com. 8221 W. Sunset Blvd., 90069. 63 rooms in the hotel, 9 cottages, 4 bungalows. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Farmer's Daughter Motel **(p. 32)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Close to the Farmer's Market and CBS and just had a complete renovation.... *Tel 323/937-3930 (U.S. toll-free number 800/334-1658). www.farmersdaughterhotel.com. 115 S. Fairfax Ave., 90036. 66 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Figueroa Hotel **(p. 18)** DOWNTOWN More than 75 years old but refurbished to contemporary standards, the Hotel Fig is a prewar classic with a Moorish-Mexican look that's vintage Southern California. Good pool, and both the Convention Center and Staples Center are within walking distance.... *Tel 213/627-8971. www.figueroahotel.com. 939 S. Figueroa St., 90015. 285 rooms. AE, DC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 4 on p. 34.

Georgian Hotel **(p. 23)** SANTA MONICA Small by corporate standards—only 84 rooms, and thus almost intimate. Plus it's close to the beach, the Santa Monica Pier, the Third Street Promenade, and Main Street. It has a distinctly pleasing European flavor.... *Tel 310/395-9945. www.georgianhotel.com. 1415 Ocean Ave., 90401. 84 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Hilton Checkers Hotel **(p. 18)** DOWNTOWN This is civilized hotel life at its best. Quiet, very personal and private in tone, and right in the heart of the Financial District. You get what you pay for and more.... *Tel 213/624-0000 (U.S. toll-free number 800/WYNDHAM). www.hiltoncheckers.com. 535 S. Grand Ave., 90071. 188 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 4 on p. 34.

Holloway Motel **(p. 29)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Great for sampling the delights of gay WeHo, but you can still slip away and cook your own meals—if you land one of the kitchenette units.... *Tel 323/654-2454. www.hollowaymotel.com. 8465 Santa Monica Blvd., 90069. 22 rooms. AE, MC, V. $*

Hollywood Celebrity Hotel **(p. 30)** HOLLYWOOD The last celebrity who stayed here wasn't anyone you've seen in a long, long time. But it is in Hollywood, and it's less expensive than the Roosevelt (which it tries vainly to imitate).... *Tel 323/850-6464. www.hotelcelebrity.com. 1775 Orchid Ave., 90028. 40 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $*

See Map 3 on p. 33.

Hollywood International Hostel **(p. 22)** HOLLYWOOD This bare-bones hostel offers the biggest bang for your buck if all you require is a safe place to crash.... *Tel 323/469-6781. www.hollywoodhostels.com. 7038 Hollywood Blvd., 90028. 53 rooms, sheets included. DISC, MC, V. $*

See Map 3 on p. 33.

Hollywood Metropolitan Hotel & Plaza **(p. 19)** HOLLYWOOD A smart alternative to the larger chains in Hollywood, it's clean, affordable, centrally located, and safe.... *Tel 323/962-5800. Fax 323/466-0646. www.metropolitanhotel.com. 5825 Sunset Blvd., 90028. 90 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 3 on p. 33.

Hollywood Orchid Suites **(p. 30)** HOLLYWOOD On still-gentrifying Orchid Avenue, but right now it's simply cheap, family-friendly, and not in an area I'd send my daughter into at night—but then, that's me.... *Tel 323/874-9678. www.orchidsuites.com. 1753 N. Orchid Ave., 90028. 40 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 3 on p. 33.

Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel **(p. 20)** HOLLYWOOD The ghosts of old Hollywood are said to make regular appearances at this landmark hotel, newly restored, right across from Grauman's Chinese Theater.... *Tel 323/466-7000 (U.S. toll-free number 800/950-7667). www.hollywoodroosevelt.com. 7000 Hollywood Blvd., 90028. 335 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 3 on p. 33.

Hostelling International Santa Monica Hostel **(p. 22)** SANTA MONICA When you're carrying your life on your back, this is the place to set it down. Dorm room beds start at under $30 a night.... *Tel 310/393-9913. Fax 310/393-1769. www.hilosangeles.org. 1436 2nd St., 90401. MC, V. $*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Hotel California **(p. 23)** SANTA MONICA Come on. How could you come to L.A. and not want to stay in a place called the Hotel California?... *Tel 310/393-2363. www.hotelca.com. 1670 Ocean Ave., 90401. 26 rooms, 6 of them suites. AE, DC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Hotel Carmel **(p. 23)** SANTA MONICA This is a limited-service hotel (meaning no room service), but its proximity to the Third

Street Promenade definitely makes it something to consider.... *Tel 310/451-2469. www.hotelcarmel.com. 201 Broadway, 90401. 100 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Hotel Metropole **(p. 26)** CATALINA The ideal place to jump-start your marriage or enjoy a secret weekend with a lover worth the money.... *Tel 310/510-1884. www.hotel-metropole.com. 205 Crescent Ave., Avalon, 90704. 48 rooms. AE, MC, V. $$–$$$$*

Hotel Villa Portofino **(p. 25)** CATALINA Marble baths and an award-winning Italian restaurant. Get a room with a fireplace and an ocean view.... *Tel 310/510-0555. www.hotelvillaportofino.com. 111 Crescent Ave., Avalon, 90704. 35 rooms. AE, DISC, MC, V. $–$$*

The Inn at Venice Beach **(p. 21)** VENICE If you're simply determined to stay in Venice and close to the beach, this "inn" is suitable but not great. The rooms are generic and clean.... *Tel 310/821-2557 (U.S. toll-free number 800/828-0688). www.innatvenicebeach.com. 327 Washington Blvd., 90291. 43 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Inn on Mount Ada **(p. 26)** CATALINA The former home of chewing-gum magnate William Wrigley, Jr., this is absolutely the most wonderful place to stay on Catalina. Expensive, yes, but it's like nothing else on the island. Amazing service and amenities, but beware of the $1,000 cancellation fee.... *Tel 310/510-2030 (U.S. toll-free number 800/608-7669). www.catalina.com/mtada. 398 Wrigley Rd., Avalon, 90704. 6 rooms. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$*

Le Montrose Suite Hotel **(p. 28)** WEST HOLLYWOOD It's cozy, they have cookies like Mom used to make, and they don't care what your sexual proclivities are—just don't make a mess, even though the maids do come in twice a day. We should all live like this.... *Tel 310/855-1115. www.lemontrose.com. 900 Hammond St., 90069. 132 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC. $$–$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Le Parc Suite Hotel **(p. 28)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Beautifully run and gay friendly, Le Parc offers handsome private suites that are perfect for unwinding.... *Tel 310/855-8888 (U.S. toll-free number 800/5-SUITES). Fax 310/659-7812. 733 N. West Knoll Dr., 90069. 154 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$.*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Liberty Hotel **(p. 22)** HOLLYWOOD If you believe that freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose, then come on in. Scary.

Very scary.... *Tel 323/962-1788. 1770 Orchid Ave., 90028. 20 rooms. AE, DISC, MC, V. $*

Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel **(p. 23)** SANTA MONICA One of the classic Santa Monica beach hotel experiences, featuring great views, a very decent restaurant, and prices that let you know you're in Santa Monica.... *Tel 310/458-6700 (U.S. toll-free number 800/235-6397). 1700 Ocean Ave., 90401. 341 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$$$*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Los Angeles Athletic Club **(p. 18)** DOWNTOWN If you're a member, staying here is rock-bottom cheap, but you out-of-town losers should expect to shell out substantially more.... *Tel 213/625-2211. 431 W. 7th St., 90014. 72 rooms. AE, DC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 34.

Lowell's **(p. 28)** BEVERLY HILLS This luxury hideaway has yet to regain the exclusivity and panache it enjoyed in the '80s. Still, if it's top-drawer privacy you're seeking, no matter what the cost, then be my guest. The rooftop pool is truly wonderful.... *Tel 310/278-3344 (U.S. toll-free number 800/800-2113). 9291 Burton Way, 90210. 123 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$*

Maison 140 **(p. 25)** BEVERLY HILLS If you absolutely must stay in Beverly Hills, this quirky B&B should be your first choice—small, quiet, and with plenty of character.... *Tel 310/281-4000. www.maison140beverlyhills.com. 140 S. Lasky Dr., 90212. 43 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Millennium Biltmore Hotel **(p. 18)** DOWNTOWN The interior decor is absolutely stunning and as close to a grand hotel in Europe as you'll find in this part of the country.... *Tel 213/624-1011 (U.S. toll-free number 800/245-8673). 506 S. Grand Ave., 90071. 683 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 34.

Miyako Hotel Los Angeles **(p. 29)** LITTLE TOKYO Sure the rooms are a little small, but the location can't be beat if you're looking for proximity to sushi, karaoke, and government offices.... *Tel 213/617-2000 (U.S. toll-free number 800/228-6596). www.miyakoinn.com. 328 E. 1st St., 90012. 124 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 4 on p. 34.

Mondrian **(p. 19)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Hip, exclusive, expensive, and dressed to the tits like the celebrity whore it is.... *Tel*

323/650-8999 (U.S. toll-free number 800/525-8029). 8440 Sunset Blvd., 90069. 235 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$$$

See Map 5 on p. 35.

New Otani Hotel **(p. 29)** LITTLE TOKYO Wearing its age well, this staple of Little Tokyo is especially attractive for its third-floor garden. That and its plethora of special rates for weekends, attorneys, government workers, online bookings.... *Tel 213/629-1200. www.newotani.com. 120 S. Los Angeles St., 90012. 435 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 4 on p. 34.

Omni Hotel **(p. 18)** DOWNTOWN Located in California Plaza and ideal for CEOs, its sleek presentation and attention to the needs of first-class travelers is without parallel.... *Tel 213/617-3300. Fax 213/617-3399. 251 S. Olive St., 90012. 434 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 34.

Orlando Hotel **(p. 30)** WEST LOS ANGELES Built for the 1984 Olympics, this centrally located boutique hotel was renovated in 1997 and has a new restaurant.... *Tel 323/658-6600 (U.S. toll-free number 800/62-HOTEL). 8384 W. 3rd St., 90048. 98 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Pavilion Lodge **(p. 26)** CATALINA This is the sort of place tour groups stay at, maybe because the room rate includes cross-channel transportation. It's okay and will do in a pinch, but it lacks ambience.... *Tel 310/510-2500. www.scico.com/html/pavilion_lodge.html. 513 Crescent Ave., Avalon, 90704. 73 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $–$$$*

Ramada Plaza **(p. 29)** WEST HOLLYWOOD It may be a chain hotel, but it's aggressively gay-friendly and it has a Du-Par's on-site. Renovated top-to-toe in 1998.... *Tel 310/652-6400. www.ramadaweho.com. 8585 Santa Monica Blvd., 90069. 176 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

The Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel **(p. 28)** BEVERLY HILLS You know this hotel is all about luxe simply from walking into its creamy-white marble lobby.... *Tel 310/275-5200. 9500 Wilshire Blvd., 90212-2405. 395 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Renaissance Hollywood **(p. 24)** HOLLYWOOD It's a Marriott, but it doesn't feel like it. This is the place to stay if you're up for an Oscar—it's only a quick jaunt between the elephants in the plaza of the Kodak Theatre complex. Great art, '50s modern furniture throughout.... *Tel 323/856-1200. Fax 323/856-1205.*

www.renaissancehotels.com. 1755 N. Highland Ave., 90028. 637 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$$$

See Map 3 on p. 33.

Royal Pagoda Motel **(p. 19)** CHINATOWN Right at the end of Chinatown, this is a handy, cheap, and clean alternative to sleeping in the bus station.... *Tel 323/223-3381. 995 N. Broadway, 90012. 36 rooms. AE, MC, V. $*

See Map 4 on p. 34.

San Vicente Inn Resort **(p. 29)** WEST HOLLYWOOD In search of your inner man-boy? It's always playtime around here, and some of these scamps just can't keep their swimsuits on!... *Tel 310/854-6915. www.gayresort.com/sanvicenteinn. 846 N. San Vicente Blvd., 90069. 49 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $–$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Shutters on the Beach **(p. 23)** SANTA MONICA Prep school–type luxury comes with a hefty price tag, but this is one of the few places to stay on the beach unless you want to claim your stake beneath the pier.... *Tel 310/458-0030. Fax 310/458-4589. www.shuttersonthebeach.com. 1 Pico Blvd., 90405. 198 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$$*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Sofitel Ma Maison Hotel **(p. 27)** WEST HOLLYWOOD It's "Beverly Hills Adjacent" with a (fading) residue of hipness. One of the few places you can stay and not need a car to enjoy yourself. ***Hint:*** For a better room rate, ask for nonrefundable prices.... *Tel 310/278-5444. 8555 Beverly Blvd., 90048. 311 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Standard **(p. 19)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Are you hip enough? I don't think so. This place is so of-the-minute, it's already tired and depressing.... *Tel 323/650-9090. www.standardhotel.com. 8300 Sunset Blvd., 90069. 139 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 35.

Standard Downtown **(p. 18)** DOWNTOWN Brings a touch of Hollywood elitism right into the heart of L.A.'s egalitarian center. Despite the off-putting attitude of the staff, the price is right and the location is central.... *Tel 213/892-8080. www.standardhotel.com. 550 S. Flower St., 90071. 206 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 34.

Sunset Marquis Hotel and Villas **(p. 19)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Located just off the Strip, it's the perfect package of California living at its best: the gardens, the pools, the security, the Sunset Strip right there at your fingertips.... *Tel 310/657-1333.*

www.sunsetmarquishotel.com. 1200 N. Alta Loma Rd., 90069. 115 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$$

Venice Beach Cotel **(p. 22)** VENICE Rooms here start at $15 a night and no, it's not a flophouse but a hostel located within spitting distance of the boardwalk.... *Tel 310/399-7649. www.venicebeachcotel.com. 25 Windward Ave., 90291. 30 rooms. MC, V. $*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Venice Beach House **(p. 21)** VENICE Without a doubt, this is the coziest and most charming place in Venice Beach, deservedly popular with Europeans. At the lowest rates you may be sharing a bath.... *Tel 310/823-1966. www.venicebeachhouse.com. 15 30th Ave., 90291. 9 rooms. MC, V. $$*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

Viceroy Santa Monica **(p. 24)** SANTA MONICA Some of the highest prices on the sand, but who cares when you're cheek to cheek with the stars of the week.... *Tel 310/451-8711. Fax 310/260-7515. www.viceroysantamonica.com. 1819 Ocean Ave., 90401. 170 rooms. AE, DC, JCB, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$*

See Map 2 on p. 16.

West Hollywood Hyatt **(p. 19)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Once this was where rock superslugs would throw childish fits and toss TVs out of windows. Ah, the good old days. Now it's just another Hyatt, although it is on the Strip.... *Tel 323/656-1234. 8401 W. Sunset Blvd., 90069. 262 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites **(p. 18)** DOWNTOWN Built in 1976, this conventioneer's wet dream has aged well, especially following a 1994 renovation.... *Tel 213/624-1000 (U.S. toll-free number 800/937-8461). Fax 213/654-9287. www.westin.com. 404 S. Figueroa St., 90071. 1,354 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 34.

W Westwood **(p. 31)** WESTWOOD Whatever, whenever takes on a new approach for young Westside hoteliers not hip enough to be sleek, but cool enough to be trendy.... *Tel 310/208-8765. www.starwoodhotels.com. 930 Hilgard Ave., 90024. 258 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$*

Wyndham Bel Age **(p. 27)** WEST HOLLYWOOD The office suites alone are worth it to the blocked aspiring writer longing to revise a block into a working weekend. ***Note:*** As we went to press, this property had been bought by Blackstone and was slated to be converted into an LXR Luxury Resort..... *Tel 310/854-1111. Fax*

310/854-0926. www.wyndham.com/hotels/LAXBL/main.wnt. 1020 N. San Vicente Blvd., 90069. 200 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$

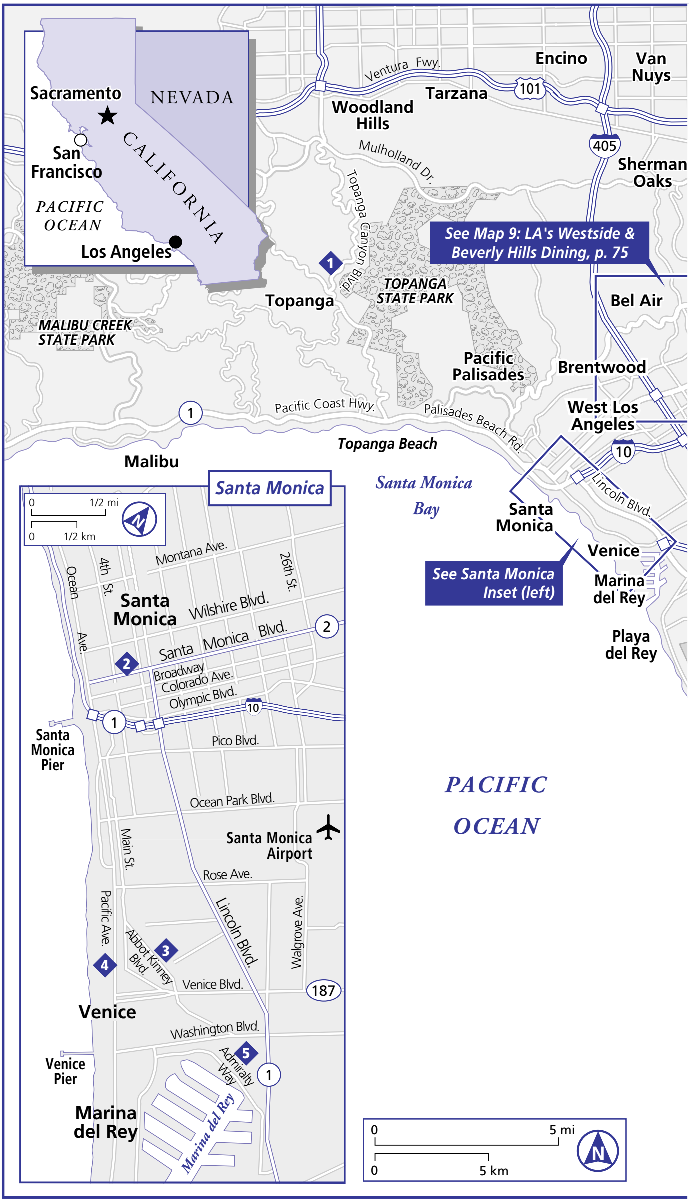
Zane Grey Pueblo Hotel **(p. 27)** CATALINA This very charming B&B is the perfect getaway from just about everything.… *Tel 310/510-0966 (U.S. toll-free number 800/378-3256). 199 Chimes Tower Rd., Avalon, 90704. 16 rooms. AE, MC, V. $–$$*

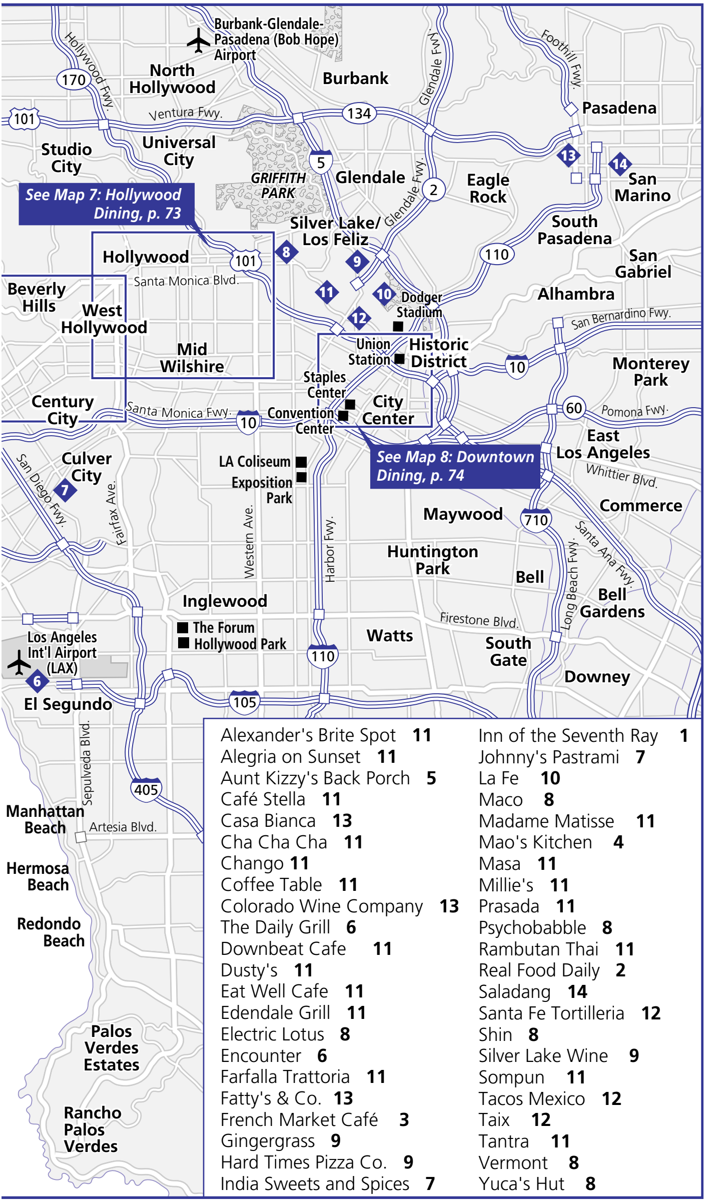
D I N

ING

2

Map 6: Los Angeles Dining Orientation


Sacramento
NEVADA
San Francisco
CALIFORNIA
PACIFIC OCEAN
Los Angeles
Ventura Fwy.
Encino
Van Nuys
Tarzana
101
Woodland Hills
Mulholland Dr.
405
Sherman Oaks
Topanga Canyon Blvd.
See Map 9: LA's Westside & Beverly Hills Dining, p. 75
1
TOPANGA STATE PARK
Topanga
Bel Air
MALIBU CREEK STATE PARK
Pacific Palisades
Brentwood
Pacific Coast Hwy.
Palisades Beach Rd.
West Los Angeles
10
Topanga Beach
Malibu
Santa Monica
Santa Monica Bay
Lincoln Blvd.
Santa Monica
Venice
See Santa Monica Inset (left)
Marina del Rey
Playa del Rey
0 1/2 mi
0 1/2 km
N
Montana Ave.
4th St.
26th St.
Ocean Ave.
Santa Monica
Wilshire Blvd.
2
Santa Monica Blvd.
Broadway
Colorado Ave.
Olympic Blvd.
10
Pico Blvd.
Santa Monica Pier
Ocean Park Blvd.
Santa Monica Airport
Main St.
Rose Ave.
Pacific Ave.
Lincoln Blvd.
Walgrove Ave.
3
4
Abbot Kinney Blvd.
Venice Blvd.
187
Venice
Washington Blvd.
5
Admiralty Way
Venice Pier
Marina del Rey
PACIFIC OCEAN
0 5 mi
0 5 km
N


Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena (Bob Hope) Airport
Hollywood Fwy.
170
North Hollywood
Burbank
Glendale Fwy.
Foothill Fwy.
Pasadena
101
Ventura Fwy.
134
Studio City
Universal City
5
GRIFFITH PARK
Glendale
Glendale Fwy.
2
Eagle Rock
13
14
San Marino
See Map 7: Hollywood Dining, p. 73
Silver Lake/ Los Feliz
South Pasadena
Hollywood
101
8
9
110
San Gabriel
Santa Monica Blvd.
Beverly Hills
West Hollywood
11
10
Dodger Stadium
Alhambra
12
San Bernardino Fwy.
Union Station
Historic District
Mid Wilshire
Staples Center
10
Monterey Park
Century City
Santa Monica Fwy.
10
Convention Center
City Center
60
Pomona Fwy.
East Los Angeles
See Map 8: Downtown Dining, p. 74
Whittier Blvd.
Culver City
LA Coliseum
Exposition Park
San Diego Fwy.
7
Fairfax Ave.
Commerce
Maywood
710
Santa Ana Fwy.
Western Ave.
Harbor Fwy.
Huntington Park
Bell
Long Beach Fwy.
Bell Gardens
Inglewood
The Forum
Hollywood Park
Firestone Blvd.
Watts
Los Angeles Int'l Airport (LAX)
110
South Gate
Downey
6
El Segundo
105
Sepulveda Blvd.
405
Manhattan Beach
Artesia Blvd.
Hermosa Beach
Redondo Beach
Palos Verdes Estates
Rancho Palos Verdes

Alexander's Brite Spot	**11**
Alegria on Sunset	**11**
Aunt Kizzy's Back Porch	**5**
Café Stella	**11**
Casa Bianca	**13**
Cha Cha Cha	**11**
Chango	**11**
Coffee Table	**11**
Colorado Wine Company	**13**
The Daily Grill	**6**
Downbeat Cafe	**11**
Dusty's	**11**
Eat Well Cafe	**11**
Edendale Grill	**11**
Electric Lotus	**8**
Encounter	**6**
Farfalla Trattoria	**11**
Fatty's & Co.	**13**
French Market Café	**3**
Gingergrass	**9**
Hard Times Pizza Co.	**9**
India Sweets and Spices	**7**
Inn of the Seventh Ray	**1**
Johnny's Pastrami	**7**
La Fe	**10**
Maco	**8**
Madame Matisse	**11**
Mao's Kitchen	**4**
Masa	**11**
Millie's	**11**
Prasada	**11**
Psychobabble	**8**
Rambutan Thai	**11**
Real Food Daily	**2**
Saladang	**14**
Santa Fe Tortilleria	**12**
Shin	**8**
Silver Lake Wine	**9**
Sompun	**11**
Tacos Mexico	**12**
Taix	**12**
Tantra	**11**
Vermont	**8**
Yuca's Hut	**8**

Basic Stuff

Once upon a time, the culinary culture of Los Angeles was defined by the city's dominant Midwestern heritage. We're talking either basic meat-and-potatoes fare or else bad imitations of what passed for good eating in New York or Chicago. Sure, there was always Mexican and Chinese food around, but ethnic cuisine was only acceptable if it was toned down—the spices reduced and the dishes emasculated to fit in with Angelenos' bland-is-best sensibilities. In fact, for far too long the most reliable meal in the City of the Angels was a burger, a side order of greasy fries, and a drink. And, hey, in some instances, it still is. Happily for those seeking more civilized dining, however, the city's movable feast is now so globally varied, so affordable, and so lacking in San Franciscan pretension that even the most recalcitrant anorexic won't have any trouble finding satisfaction somewhere on the grid.

In other words, thank God for L.A.'s immigrants, legal or otherwise. We can now tell the difference between *sopas* from Oaxaca and *pupusas* from El Salvador, soba and udon, and Panang versus Mussamun curry.

So, where do you go nowadays when the munchies set in? Just about anywhere. It used to be that the wealthy gourmands of Beverly Hills and West L.A. would head east for something a little out of the ordinary, a little un-Caucasoid and racy, and this was as far as they'd get. Conversely, when the po' folk of the Eastside wanted to splurge and step up for the night, they'd head west, winding up in the same place.

Well, I'm here to tell you that all bets are now off. It seems we've grown up. It all started in the '70s when California Cuisine first hit the streets, drifting south from Alice Waters' Chez Panisse in Berkeley, daring us to put something fresh and foreign into our mouths. Once we capitulated, our taste buds were forever altered. Throw in the cacophony of herbs and spices brought to the city by the Pacific Rim immigrants, and you begin to get an idea of what's currently digesting in L.A.'s collective intestines. Who are our kitchen gods? For starters: Wolfgang Puck, Nobu Matsuhisa, Joaquim Splichal, Tommy Tang, Nancy Silverton and Mark Peel, Toribio Prado, Evan Kleiman, and Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger. Downtown, East L.A., West L.A., Silver Lake, or Santa Monica, your destination depends only on the tickling of your tongue and the amount of gas in your tank (this is L.A., after all). View the 1,200 L.A. restaurants that accept online reservations via

www.restaurantrow.com. At this handy site you can also check out menus and driving directions and read reviews.

How to Dress

It's pretty obvious that Angelenos lack the metropolitan flash of New Yorkers or most Europeans. Anything that covers (or exposes) the skin is considered acceptable couture out here. Just wear shoes; that's all we ask.

Still, for you neurotic slaves of fashion, there are some general rules: If you're in the mood to dress up, go to The Ivy or Crustacean—people will notice the Gucci and pearls. Understated hipsters on the rise wear khakis, a Hanes T-shirt, and a $1,200 Armani coat when having martinis with the leering producer wearing Hugo Boss—strictly Musso & Frank's. At Eat Well, Electric Lotus, or Fred 62, the dress code is vintage, early Matt Drudge or Prada—though as long as you've got a pair of *really* great shoes, you can get away with anything.

Getting the Right Table

There's really only one way to be assured of having the best seat in the house, and that's by being famous, notorious, or scandalously rich (or preferably all three). It's fairly obvious where the power seats are—they're the ones with the great view. At Dan Tana's, prime seating is in the back where the lighting is low. At Electric Lotus, the place to be is behind the curtains of the private banquettes; at Yamashiro you want to be out on the open patio. On the other hand, at Millie's you want to be *inside,* away from the people waiting for tables and the car exhaust on Sunset.

The Lowdown

Eastside essentials... There are a handful of places so intrinsically L.A. in their food, delivery, and ambience that corporate cloning is virtually impossible. You want this sort of food, you gotta come. At the top of the pantheon is **Yuca's Hut,** a humble little shack-stand across from Albertson's supermarket on Hillhurst Avenue in Los Feliz. Family-run and only open for lunch, it serves the best burritos in the world, with just the right balance of soupy ranchero beans, cilantro, and meat. I had a friend in New York who wanted me to airmail frozen Yuca burritos to him every week, but it simply wouldn't have been the same. Part of their flavor comes from sitting at the tables in the parking lot, gazing at the Griffith Park Observatory in the hills above, and sipping on your lemonade as you scan *Daily Variety* for jobs. More or less in the same neighborhood is **Cha Cha Cha,** a funky little slice of the Caribbean that appeared here long before Silver Lake was hip 'n' happening, courtesy of chef Toribio Prado. The TV-studio people like to swing by after work, members of my mountain-bike team drop in for carbo loads, and gay district attorneys drive over from Downtown on their lunch breaks. The black beans and rice for breakfast are absolutely essential—those, and the soft-shell crabs. Heading east on Sunset you'll find **Millie's,** an oracle of Silver Lake cool. This was originally just a breakfast diner, started by local scene-maker and musician Paul Greenstein, but it has since fed successive waves of punks, post-punks, swingers, and hoards of Gen-Y musicians searching for that elusive big-label deal. It's on everyone's map now, so you'll probably have to wait for breakfast on the weekends, but during the week seating is still easy to get. The food is heavy without being *too* greasy, and the place boasts an amazing jukebox. The clientele is bizarre and nearly as greasy (and tasty) as the food. If Millie's is too heavy on a queasy stomach, head next door to **Madame Matisse.** You can build your own omelet or have a wonderful egg white, salmon, and brie combo that will knock your socks off. They also have good sandwiches along with the standard espresso-based coffee drinks. Finally, try the best pizza in L.A. at Eagle Rock's Olympian pizzeria **Casa Bianca**—any complaints about the trek you took to come out here will evaporate on your lips. They only have four styles (cheese, sausage, Hawaiian, and deluxe) and use nothing that isn't used by zillions of pizza makers everywhere. Yet somehow they've discovered a balance of toppings, dough, and heat that produces a truly transcendental slice. There's also a full Italian dinner menu.

L.A. icons: safe for eating... Philippe's, located in Downtown near Union Station, is supposedly the home of the French Dip sandwich, and while the meat ain't what it used to be (who among us is?), the place is an official historical landmark, with a plaque out front to prove it. The restaurant was established in 1908, and for years this was where the circus folk would hang out. There's still sawdust on the floors, and the long wooden tables and short stools have propped up many a butt grown hefty on the cheap meat dips. It's a deal: The beef is a mere $3.85, the lamb just 30¢ more, and the coffee is Yuban at 9¢ a cup. Then up in Hollywood there's **Musso & Frank Grill.** People come here for the martinis—and because it's something you supposedly *have* to do in L.A., especially if you're an aspiring screenwriter. You'd better come in knowing exactly what you want, though, because everything here is a la carte and the menu is encyclopedic. Legendary items include flannel pancakes, anchovy-drenched Caesar salad, crusty bread, and tongue sandwiches. Eat at Manny's counter and you'll hear all the latest jokes along with odds on the next big game. He'll also crack your baked potato for you and kiss your date's hand. People rave about the chicken potpies, but frankly I found the same effect can be achieved by dumping a can of mushroom soup into a cardboard container. Antique food, a friend calls it—and she *loves* the place. Like all of the aforementioned eateries, the **Apple Pan** is part of every Angeleno's formative years. This little West L.A. diner feels like it hasn't changed since the '50s; it's an institution, for sure, but if the apple pie and burgers weren't still happening, this place would have turned into a Starbucks long ago. And please—don't linger over your meal. Others are waiting. On the Strip in West Hollywood, **Duke's** is still the mother of all coffee shops, a place where the food is greasy, fresh, and fabulous. It's been around since the '60s, when it was part of the Tropicana motel, serving unknown bands on tour. Its clientele is still primarily rock–'n'-rollers, but you don't need groupies to get a great meal and a good time here. Fresh-squeezed orange juice served in giant tumblers is just a preview of the stadium-size portions of everything at Duke's. Check out the apple pancakes—flapjacks roughly the size of welcome mats—and the fatty sandwich menu. Indigestion? Signs point to "yes" but it's well worth it. Highly recommended. Finally, no culinary trip to Los Angeles would be complete without a trip to **Campanile,** my choice for the best and most consistently tasty California-Mediterranean food in the city. The restaurant's clientele ranges from older wealthy couples to JAPs dressed up in their moms' jewels for a night on the town to just about anybody who loves good food, in a relaxed and architecturally pleasing setting, including the best bread this side of Paris. The Monday-night family-style dinners are the most fun.

L.A. icons: for drinking only (no eating)... Okay. First there's **El Coyote,** which is an *icon,* God knows why. There is nothing truly edible on the menu (the tostadas come with canned beets and peas on top), but the margaritas do the job nicely as long as you *don't* order them by the pitcher. *Eat nothing but the chips and salsa.* **Canter's** is another one of L.A.'s legendary after-hours eateries, immortalized in film and song. The best things about Canter's are the incredibly cranky waitresses and the 24/7 hours. Plus, they don't mind the occasional food fight. After a certain time of night, the management expects all the customers to come in drunk and will treat you accordingly. The bakery is only so-so, the lights are too harsh, and the food is never as good as the posse of drunk teenagers at the table next to you thinks it is. Up overlooking Hollywood is the terribly overpriced **Yamashiro.** Want to get your date in the mood? Yamashiro has one of the most amazing views in town. The drinks stink and the food is worse, but the vista from the front tables is truly outstanding, and the fake *daimyo* castle setting will give you a chuckle. Thankfully, the place is only open for dinner.

More Italian than Chef Boyardee... Tucked away into a Hollywood Boulevard offshoot is family-owned **Miceli's,** the second-oldest restaurant in Hollywood, which has served Pavarotti-size portions accented with hearty marinara and fresh garlic since 1949. Don't let its nice-but-casual atmosphere mislead you—this place isn't just for the average Joe. Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn, President Kennedy, and the Beatles ate here and if you look very closely through the dim lights, you'll see current celebs. A Frank Sinatra protégé tickles the ivories, and he takes requests—all Frank, all the time, and if you buy him a drink, he'll tell you the story of how Sinatra once told him he had "nice tone." The slightly more upscale set whose tastes run more for northern Italian cuisine head to **Farfalla Trattoria,** where excellent food is served with a side of snotty waitstaff. Romantic lighting and old-world-style brickwork make for a cozy meal with your Tesoro—extremely cozy. Ultraquaint tables make for poor elbow room between strangers who won't make eye contact unless you accidentally start eating their dinner and drinking their date's pinot noir. At **Dolce, Enoteca e Ristorante,** *puhleeze:* It's all just too faux-Euro for words. Since it opened in 2005 (in the site of former snooty eatery Le Chardonnay), Dolce is a huge hit with buddies of *That '70s Show* celeb Ashton Kutcher and his fellow actor-owners of this Melrose restaurant-bar. FYI, Enoteca is Italian for "house of wine" and for vine-freaks the 2,000 bottles stacked in the see-through cooler are the main attraction. At **Cheebo** the decor is basic: white butcher paper on the tables, simple bus benches, and, of course, pizza by the foot. People come here not for a slice but a slab. For you novices out there: That's a 3-foot chunk of puffy sourdough crust topped with cheese and anything from jalapeños to chopped clams to pine nuts to roasted artichokes; the list is only limited by the length of the paper. Finally, if you've only got spare change, try the aptly named **Hard Times Pizza** in Silver Lake. Minimal seating, great antipastos, and wonderful pizzas sold by the slice. As always, parking's a problem, but if you've only got coins, you're probably on foot anyway.

Burgers and dogs... You know exactly what you're in for when you walk into a place called **Fatburger,** so don't complain later. You're gonna get a burger, and you're gonna get fat. What you probably *didn't* know is that the various Fatburger outlets around town have great jukeboxes—the only recompense for working around all those simmering lipids. Even more famous: There are lots of imitators, but the real **Tommy's Original World Famous Burger** was established in 1946 at the corner of Rampart and Beverly boulevards. Tommy's is known for its incredibly goopy chili hamburgers. They're actually not the best in the city, but try telling that to the 50 million desperate Angelenos who have stumbled in here over the years. It takes about 15 seconds to place your order and pay. Digesting takes somewhat longer. This is also the best place in the city to experience the sensation of heartburn while watching a drive-by shooting. Those with a taste for salty, juicy meat dripping in hot oil at 3am can open wide at **Johnny's Pastrami,** easily the best pastrami in the city.

On the wiener side, **Skooby's** in Hollywood, on the Walk of Fame, is truly a dog for the ages, rating "4.5 dogs" (out of a possible 5) among local fans of extruded mystery meat. Bonus points for hosting free live outdoor rock concerts on Saturdays, right out on the sidewalk. Another place called **Pink's** specializes in frankfurters, which should tell you more than you want to know. Consider for a minute: Who would want a "Pink" hot dog? You have to be either seriously immature, seriously drunk, or both to think of these disgusting little mystery-meat extrusions as "food." Right in the neighborhood, more or less, is the world-famous West Hollywood landmark known as **Tail o' the Pup:** a hot-dog stand shaped like (what else?) a hot dog in a bun. Marvel for a moment at the glory of Los Angeles architecture's golden era, and then try keeping down one of their tasty delicacies. And don't worry if your stomach starts rumbling like a mariachi band—Cedars Sinai Hospital is right up the street.

A side order of belly dancers... There's really nothing like eating with your fingers and playing with your food while buxom women swirl around you jiggling their breasts. It's just like being a baby all over again, which is why people love coming to **Dar Maghreb.** The fare—lemony chicken, fresh pita, grilled meats and veggies—is adequate but not great. But the overall effect, with belly dancers, music, and unrepentant revelers, makes this one of the best party-time dining experiences in Hollywood. You can get the Tunisian version of this experience at **Moun of Tunis.** It's basically another North African titillation that you can eat with your hands and come away satisfied, fingers sticky with garlic and lemon, and probably drunker than you intended. Paradoxically, this is the perfect place for a girls' night out—since there is nothing as liberating as watching women who weigh far more than you yet are totally comfortable with their bodies and supremely confident in their appeal.

Tongue-Thai-ed... L.A. is rich with Thai restaurants. They are cheap, ubiquitous, and 90% reliable. In fact, they're so common now that you can ask just about anyone to name at least three favorite Thai places and they'll almost never name the same three names. Over in Pasadena, **Saladang** is considered by many to be the most Bangkok-reminiscent eatery in town. The space feels like an artist's loft, and the food arrives elegantly styled, but don't let the glossy veneer distract you—this is one Thai restaurant that immediately exceeds jaded expectations. Begin your meal with the "gold pouch" dumpling appetizers and finish it with the wonderful dessert of sweet sticky rice topped with mango. In between, you're on your own. ***Hint:*** There are no bad choices. In Silver Lake you'll find **Sompun,** one of the first Thai restaurants to cross Vermont Avenue back in the '70s. Sompun has built a steady and loyal following in the neighborhood. It offers home-style Thai cooking that arrives at the table sweet but never overspiced. Just about everything on the menu is wonderful. The ambience is of being in someone's home on the outskirts of Bangkok: The tablecloths are white linen, and portraits of the king and queen hang on the walls. In the summer there are tables outside in the backyard—the best place to sit, as long as the mosquitoes aren't biting. The beef satay is *outstanding.* **Chan Dara** isn't the best Thai restaurant in town at 6pm, but at 2am the pickings are slim. The place is open way late and is located in close proximity to the Hollywood clubs and recording studios, so it gets a lot of musicians. Maybe that's why it's always so loud here—everyone's a little deaf. **Chao Praya,** in the heart of the music-studio district in Hollywood, is great for late-night après-concert Thai food—the barbecued chicken is a winner. **Rambutan Thai,** located in a funky strip mall in Echo Park, has gotten raves from restaurant bloggers, mainly for its garlic-heavy chicken and pork entrees. They also have the standard pad Thai, prik king, and so forth, but the grill items are the best choice. I come here for the homemade won ton. If you're a beefeater, try the "crying tiger beef," marinated charbroiled rib-eye that melts in your mouth like sushi.

Living treasures of Little Tokyo... If your idea of Japanese food is limited to tempura and sushi, then a major taste awakening awaits you at the heart of the city in Little Tokyo. The amusing Japanese take on curry has been perfected at **Curry House,** a local minichain that delivers up sauces that are slightly sweet rather than spicy and are served on pasta as well as on rice. The outlet in Weller Court is a major lunch favorite for *Los Angeles Times* and city workers. The chicken curry is probably most palatable to the average American's tongue, but me, I like the "Wiener & Spinach-wieners, sautéed spinach and eggs with curry sauce." Yummmm! The most expensive curry entree is the shrimp, at just over $8. Just down the street is **Kokekokko.** If you like yakitori, this is a place you should check out. Yakitori is a style of grilled meat and veggies that are prepared on bamboo skewers, two at a time, like sushi pieces. They cost about the same and are just about as filling. Orders are placed in much the same way, too, by selecting items a la carte as the mood strikes you. Here you can get grilled quail eggs, thigh meat, skin, and gizzard. Best bet is to order the 10-item sampler, at $23 per person. Just when you thought there was nothing new in Little Tokyo, a few years back, along came **Tot,** short for Teishoku-of-Tokyo. Teishoku means "a regular meal" in Japanese, but the food here ranks far above regular. It's not haute cuisine or some hyphenated blend, but rather, everyday restaurant food (noodles to teriyaki to curry to tempura) prepared with a fresh eye and an off-kilter approach. The place is a huge hit with young Tokyo tourists and the downtown artist crowd. Expect to wait for a table at lunchtime. The **Mitsuru Cafe** in the Tokyo Village Plaza features a variety of snack foods, but the star of the show can be seen right in the front window: little, sweet red-bean pancakes called *imagawaki* that are cooked up on an old prewar iron griddle. This is typical Japanese festival food, the sort of thing you buy to eat while you stroll.

Eat it raw... When people picture Japanese food, they almost automatically think of sushi—as in raw fish, wasabi, and the struggle to attract the attention of the *sushiya-san* (sushi cutter). Sushi is a unique food, in that it's always better in a restaurant. In fact, you'll never ever be able to make it at home without extensive training and a full-time dedication to browsing in fish markets. That's why I recommend starting at **R-23** on 3rd Street. It's easy walking distance from Little Tokyo and the downtown fish and produce markets, so you *know* the food is fresh. The decor is properly minimalist, like one of local artist Carol Kaufman's drawings, layers hidden within monochrome overlays, but the real art here is the kind you can eat. **Shin** in Silver Lake was one of the top five sushi places in the city at one time. I wish it had retained its former glory as one of the Eastside's great unknown and nearly affordable sushi bars. Today it's neither cheap nor unknown. The sushi is still outstanding, though I always feel that I'm paying just a shade too much for it, and that the slabs of fish are a little too big, and that my clothes are somehow just not trendy enough for the waiters. If you really want to drop a bundle for sushi, you can't go wrong at **Matsuhisa,** the flagship restaurant of chef Nobu Matsuhisa. It's in Beverly Hills, so the clientele is about what you'd expect. Absolutely nothing, however, will prepare you for what Nobu's kitchen does with fish, raw or cooked. The cuisine is Peruvian-Japanese, but that really doesn't describe it well. Think of miso-broiled entrees, the intensity of sea-urchin innards, the spiky tang of shiso leaf—and then throw in a Latin American influence, and you'll have a sense of the truly bizarre, Continental–Third World–Pacific Rim taste treat that awaits you. Proceed with caution, though—it could cost more than your hotel room.

French connection... Impress your overnight guest with your cunning French linguistics at **Angelique Cafe,** a frequent, downtown, outdoor, cafe-style lunch spot that is amazing, cheap, and French. The truly French, however, *mange* at the **French Market Café** where Euro-locals of Venice and Santa Monica often order their baguettes and onion soup in their native tongue. Try to ignore the slight snobbery unless you *parlez français,* but then again, maybe that's all part of the ambience. **Taix** is French country cuisine at reasonable prices, sort of. The Taix family has been serving simple French cuisine since 1927 and has been at the Echo Park location since 1962. Private booths, great sourdough bread (they come from a line of bakers), and mammoth tureens of soup. There's an award-winning 20,000-bottle wine cellar below ground. But locals are coming in for the open-mic night on Wednesday and the live music and the reasonable prices. **Dusty's** is a great little French (via Montreal) bistro in the dead zone on Sunset Boulevard between Silver Lake and Echo Park. Despite the location, this roomy little addition to Eastside dining is worth the visit. The booths are comfy, the salads are large and toothsome, and it's the kind of place where you can linger over your espresso for hours. Now if only you could smoke inside, then it would be truly French. **Café Stella** is probably the closest you can come to an intimate West Bank experience while still worrying about being hit by a drive-by on the way home. Candlelit tables, great bread, excellent wines, expensive, delicate food. It's sequestered in the courtyard at Sunset Junction, a tiny alfresco dining space removed from its Silver Lake location.

Forget it, Jake—it's Chinatown... One longtime Chinatown favorite among locals is **ABC Seafood,** where both the sweet-and-sour fish and the salt-baked shrimp get major raves. (There's also a very impressive dim sum menu to go.) The interior is cheesy elegance: heavy glass chandeliers, pink tablecloths, and fake gold everywhere—all ensconced in a windowless, featureless bunker on a Chinatown side street. Waiters hover attentively while your still-living dinner floats numbly in a wall of aquariums by the front door. End your late-night revolution against your 9-to-5 at **Mao's Kitchen** in Venice, where the beachy scenesters supplement their Red Bull chasers until 3am with "Szechwan eggplant power plant" appetizers and addictive hibiscus-flower secret sauce. This is "Chinese Country Style Cooking with Red Memories" and is fresh, spicy, and simple. Nothing is canned—try the Gang of Four fried shrimp or the Peace Not War won ton soup. And the prices are downright proletarian: A full lunch special (entree, soup, rice, and salad/egg roll) runs under $7. The portions are hefty.

Late-night bites... You can't actually drive into **Mel's Diner Drive-In,** but the faux-'50s feel makes it seem like you can. Expect "American food at its best"—thick shakes, deep-dish peach pies, burgers, and the rest. This is where you come for Valley Boy Hangover Comfort food. The staff gets an A for cheery in-character dispositions. At **Sanamluang Café** you'll find humongous, hearty bowls of noodle soup that will knock the alcohol right out of your system, for around $3. Located in the last seedy section of Hollywood Boulevard, it's packed with clubbers and hipsters after hours. The free valet parking is a plus in a part of town with no parking at all. In Inglewood, **Randy's Donuts** is a reliable spot for deep fried dough 24/7—and that giant 60-ft. donut on its roof makes it an L.A. classic.

Where to write your screenplay... I don't know if it's the forgiving climate or the incessant desire of Angelenos to perform in public, but all over L.A. it's now considered totally acceptable to be pecking away on a laptop and jabbering on your cellphone while your latte curdles and losers still waiting for a table glare at you. It's part of the power game, dude—deal with it. Like at the newly remodeled farmers-market haven **Kokomo Cafe,** where every screenwriter in town eventually sets up an office. The food is hearty, modeled on New Orleans cuisine, and while you slop butter on your johnnycakes, you can also study closed-captioned reports from ESPN and CNN on the TV screens. ***Warning:*** The place is a zoo on weekends. If you just need a heavy sugar rush to go with your cappuccino, try **Bob's Coffee & Doughnuts** on the far northeastern corner of the complex. Look no further—you've found the best donut in the entire world. **King's Road Cafe** has mind-bendingly strong coffee, perfect for that extra little bounce right before you pop into a pitch meeting at the CBS offices just down the street. If the place always seems crowded, that's because of all of the wannabe screenwriters taking up a full table apiece with their laptops, cellphones, and Palm Pilots. The poached eggs are dreamy here. The WeHo version of the pseudo-home office is **Hugo's,** done up in a vaguely retro coffee-shop decor, but with food that's nowhere near as good as Kokomo's (though the juice factor here is much higher). It draws a largely gay crowd, and the windows look out on Santa Monica Boulevard, so you can combine eating with some casual cruising for someone more attractive (or powerful) than your current date. By day **Psychobabble** feels like a study hall at the University of the Unpublished, plugged into the free DSL, with beaten-up sofas and mismatched chairs from the local St. Vincent De Paul. Their tea collection boasts more than 120 varieties. Crabby writers and artists steep in their bitterness at **Anastasia's Asylum,** a coffeehouse with a mean mocha and even meaner people. But what do you expect from the Westside? On the plus side, there are no posers allowed. You come here to work at tiny tables beneath the paintings from local artists, some who may be sitting next to you, glaring angrily. **Downbeat Cafe** in Echo Park, next to the Echo Park Film Society, is the area's first boho-flavored coffeehouse, a place where poets congregate, local jazz musicians put on free gigs, and layabouts come to nurse cappuccinos when they're supposed to be out looking for a job. ***Bonus:*** The 33⅓ Bookstore is right next door. Do you have a late-night thing for costumes? Ever been abducted by a UFO? Come hang out with your people at **Nova Express,** where the sci-fi camp doesn't end until 4am and you'll always have someone out of this world to watch while you page through a bad script you're getting paid minimum wage to read.

Planet Carnivore... For the dedicated beefaholic who doesn't believe all that cholesterol nonsense, nothing beats a full evening of food and drink at **Ruth's Chris Steakhouse** in Beverly Hills. Football-size steaks come to your table literally asizzle in melting butter. With its dark wood paneling, turned-out clientele, and a staff that discreetly keeps everything running like clockwork, you can almost feel the ghost of Frank Sinatra presiding over these rooms. Down in Koreatown barbecue joints are a dime a dozen, but none of them equals **Soot Bull Jeep.** The dining experience here is almost ceremonial: Raw, marinated meats and fresh vegetables are taken up with chopsticks by the diners and cast onto the individual grills at the center of each table. Korean beer arrives in 16-ounce bottles, always icy cold, bearing the vaguest trace of molasses in its frothy head.

Planet Vegan... There's a minichain of **Astro Burgers** around L.A., but a drive-through on Melrose Avenue, now simply called Astro, has reinvented itself as a major vegetarian mecca. It's on the corner of Gower Street and Melrose by the Paramount lot. Frequented by punk rockers, Mexican day laborers, and Paramount vegans tired of commissary BLTs ("hold the B!"), Astro's menu features garden burgers (no soy, no additives), garden dogs with vegetarian chili, veggie pizzas, even veggie sausages. And you carnivores can relax: There is still plenty of edible flesh to be had, including a Greek corner replete with an "Athenian Astroburger." Then up in Hollywood is **Paru's,** a little hidden oasis of excellent Indian vegetarian food overshadowed by the adjacent Kaiser high-rises and the dreaded gaze of acolytes from the Scientology complex just down the street. But don't be dismayed—this is a family-run restaurant, now in the second generation, and the kind of place where they'll remember your name after just one visit. The only meat that sets foot in this restaurant comes in walking on two legs. Vegan dishes are also easily available. The best deals are any of the combo plates, where you get a sample of everything. And as long as that mango chutney keeps coming, so will I. Because the Punjab region of India is largely agricultural, and the main chef at **India's Oven** is Punjabi, you can bet that the vegetarian meals here will be good. The interior is done up a little like a Persian disco, with mirrors all over one wall and cozy little leather booths. The best veggie meal is #18, with dal, cauliflower/potato curry, and *saag paneer* (spinach curry with homemade cheese). You can eat an entire meal here for under 10 bucks, and you probably won't be able to finish it all. Bring along your meat-loving buddies, too—all of the tandoori meats are incredible. Highly recommended. Finally, for gourmet vegan/vegetarian eats, hike over to Eagle Rock to **Fatty's & Co.,** owned by artist Kim Dingle. They have a great magazine rack, good wines, and some of the best guilt-free food in town. It's elegant, tasty, and their vegan sloppy Joes are legendary (if a bit overpriced). Definitely worth the drive. **Prasada,** in Silver Lake, is right in the heart of the retail mania around Sunset Junction. They make vegan cheeses, smoothies, and DIY quesadillas with tofu, feta, blue cheese—whatever tickles your fancy. They also have tons of teas as well as a very nongreasy breakfast menu.

Organic orgasms... Can't stand the thought of all those nasty pesticides ruining your grilled veggies? **Real Food Daily** is a must-eat for vegan aficionados. On the Westside scene for 10 years, famed L.A. vegetarian chef David Anderson prepares some of the most creative and tasty veggie dishes, which go beyond the standard vegetarian fare. The scene is a plus, too. Not just for primary health nuts, the Santa Monica locale welcomes a hip, trendy beach crowd looking for a healthy-food buzz. The dessert selection is unrivaled, unless, of course, you're lounging a la sidewalk at the **Urth Cafe,** where hordes of naturalists steep in a rich Hollywood-industry bohemian infusion. The vied-for patio seats engender a see-and-be-seen culture that hints that the person next to you dressed way down is probably a Somebody way up. Others are the hungry healthsters coolly dribbling in from the nearby Bodhi Tree Bookstore armed with a few crystal-healing books. Those who love getting away from the nightlife to eat among the wildlife at the **Inn of the Seventh Ray,** beware—the food is completely unrefined—no sugar or bleached flour, so it might come across as a little bland for the additive addicted. But the atmosphere is refined: Lights twinkle among the trees and the sound of a running brook in the background goes well with a glass of organic plum wine. A new trendy raw-foods section was recently added to the menu to keep in time with those aging Hollywood A-lister bods now eating only what doesn't need to be charred, George Foreman-ed, or nuked. A longtime organic grocery store, **Erewhon** has a very nice deli with tables out on Beverly Boulevard where you can sit and inhale exhaust while you purify your colon. It offers the typical roasted veggies, but the sandwich board also includes veggie cutlets, chicken pepperoni polenta pizza, and Ranchero tofu salad. The clientele? Hipsters in cowboy boots, career women gabbing on cellphones, and gay guys in Adidas pants and slides—your typical organic crew. Parking's a bitch, but on Sunday you can sneak into the post office parking lot next door.

Bend it like Bollywood... So you're after a little authentic Desi, and you don't mean Arnaz. Go to **India Sweets and Spices,** where you can get a little tikka with your samosas and finish it off with some gelabi and a made-to-order mango lassi, all for under $5. The lunchtime crowd is as varied as the selection of desserts, hot samosas, and curries. For those who like to bend it like Betty Crocker, India Sweets and Spices doubles as a well-stocked store of underpriced spices and every type of grain imaginable. For palates that have never tasted authentic Bombay, **Electric Lotus** in Los Feliz is the perfect introduction to Indian fusion cuisine (hold the cholera, please). The helpings are huge, the sauces rich and creamy, and the prices almost reasonable. Founded by a techno musician and based on a nightclub he owned in Goa, Electric Lotus specializes in northern Indian cuisine and has become a celeb magnet thanks to private booths and a private back room for when the cast of *That '70s Show* wants complete seclusion. Those who like to drink in their Bombay head to **Tantra,** where the strange combination of rude waitresses, mediocre food, and kick-ass DJs somehow works best while meeting friends at the bar. The mellow atmosphere of this latest addition to the burgeoning Sunset Junction is helped in part by the warm hues and almost movie-set-like Desi decor.

Attitude a la carte... In the last century **Vermont** was a cheesy Italian family restaurant called Sarno's that was more popular for its off-key opera-singing waiters than its mediocre cuisine. Now, like much of upper Vermont Avenue in Los Feliz, it's been gentrified and the result isn't pretty. Or, more accurately, it's *too* pretty. The SARNO'S sign is still out front but the campy ambience that made this place special is gone. Now it's a tasteful power-lunch trough by day and an upscale venue for impressing your date by night. Be warned (or prepared)—the mixed drinks are *strong*. The food is uninspired American cuisine you could probably make better at home, but then, you don't have a tree growing out of the middle of your dining room, do you? You're in **Dan Tana's** melding of Hollywood's golden era and today's fodder—think John Wayne in *Rio Bravo* matched up against *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*. Or maybe don't. This is a steak-'n'-scotch kind of place for power brokers, their entourage, and wannabes. On the obligatory Italian menu, you'll find meatballs and lasagna—no girly vodka salmon or basil-'n'-fresh tomato putanesca. My advice? Stick to the Kansas City steaks—and make that CC & 7 a double, please. Unsavory Appetizer #1: John Belushi phoned in his last meal right before he OD'd at the Chateau Marmont, displaying remarkably bad timing, considering his skill at comedy. Eat first, OD second. Unsavory Appetizer #2: Phil Spector ate here the evening prior to picking up an actress at a club and taking her home. "Shots were fired" goes the euphemism, the woman ended up dead, and Spector was arrested for homicide. Owner Dan Tana has been here 40 years, a combination maitre d'-host-owner-schmoozer that is rare in L.A. His presence and personality have kept his restaurant a must-visit.

Breakfast with bohos... The much-touted **Millie's** is often credited (accurately) with turning breakfast into a power meal for the goateed hoards who have nothing else to do all day. Accordingly, there have been Millie's spin-offs and imitators throughout the Los Feliz–Silver Lake–Echo Park axis. Around the corner from Trader Joe's and the Gelson's is the **Coffee Table,** a place where you can come any time and get a seat, inside or out. Dogs are welcome as long as they're well behaved. This is a civilized spot for people who enjoy late-morning breakfasts. Go for the good pastries, great fresh-fruit plate, and sausage-egg croissant that is just too rich and wonderful to eat more than once a week. Plus, *big* cups of coffee and zero attitude. Echo Park's great new breakfast spot/community clubhouse is **Chango.** They serve great coffee from Costa Java, Australian curried pies, pastries, and bagels from Brooklyn Bagel. Live music on the weekends, art shows, and an endless stream of locals tapping away on their laptops.

Sex food... Have I got your attention? Good. I've never quite understood the theory of raw oysters as raw-sex aphrodisiac—but whatever floats your boat. The raw bar of choice downtown is the **Water Grill,** probably the best place for a huge variety of pollution-free shellfish, harvested in waters from Washington to Maine. The decor is upscale Financial District, so expect to pay a premium, and with hotshot David LeFevre on board as the new head chef, expect to make your reservations even earlier. If the interior of a place is less important to you than the taste of its food, check out **Ostioneria Colima,** where you can get raw oysters for $10 a dozen. You park in the lot, order your oysters, and slurp away, mopping up the juicy remnants with fresh corn tortillas. *Heaven.* Jumbo shrimp are also served in a piquant butter-tomato sauce. And if you're dying for a beer to go with this, simply trot over to the supermarket next door.

ESCAPE FROM LAX: AIRPORT DINING

LAX offers two alternatives to fast food and plane fare. Of the two, ***Encounter****, located in that space-age construction at the entrance to the airport, is more of an event. Saucer-shaped, with 360-degree windows, it's lit brilliantly with alternating purple, blue, turquoise, and green lights and the waiters look like they just stepped off the bridge of the Enterprise. Don't drink the lava lamps; instead, wait for your Electric Barbarella. In contrast,* ***The Daily Grill*** *in the Bradley International Terminal features a menu of no-nonsense American cuisine with a touch all its own. (Attention, chicken pot-pie lovers: The Grill is as good as it gets.) If you're not flying abroad, you can still get here by grabbing one of the inner airport trams.*

Tired hangouts for the hipeoise... Your so-last-year swinger friends may try to drag you to **Fred 62** for a taste of that edgy Silver Lake buzz, but don't be fooled. This place is just another cynical attempt to evoke that trendy '50s coffee-shop shtick using retro decor with an alternative Muzak selection on loop. The big irony: The food is not much better here (and way more expensive) than the real midcentury coffee shop it displaced. The food, in fact, is terrible, and the service is slow—but it is open all night. Then again, so is the IHOP right across the street, and at least there you have some idea when your food will arrive. The look fools only Westsiders. Maybe it's because they think places like **The Ivy** are the shiznit. There you sit on the patio, sniff the roses, and request nonfat cappuccino with Kona beans, decaffeinated in the water process. And maybe a hot-fudge sundae? With two spoons? Frankly, I don't know why I keep coming here. I guess I enjoy spending too much money to sit next to amoral millionaire producers and their airhead trophy dates. The food is mediocre at best, but you know something? Nobody notices, because they're too busy jabbering on their cellphones, telling their pals that they're calling from The Ivy. And if it's late and Fred 62 feels too upscale, try **Alexander's Brite Spot,** a charming little greasy spoon in Echo Park. Open until 4am and a fave among hipsters, rock 'n' rollers, and cops, the Brite Spot has Scrabble sets for your pleasure. It's run by the people who own Eat Well and actually has some vegetarian-friendly dishes. Service sucks, but at four in the morning, who cares?

Queer food... You don't have to be gay to enjoy the following places, but it may perk your meal up a bit. First, there's **Basix Cafe,** which draws a clientele of lipstick lesbians and buffed guys with enormous pecs. But the customers are only part of the story. The place has great snacks and salads, plus a thin-crust pizza that is the best for miles. If you're not that hungry, try the scrambled-egg sandwiches—they're divine. Right nearby is the **Marix Tex Mex Café.** It has another outlet in Santa Monica, but please, don't bother. If you want the full effect, you have to come here to the WeHo original outlet. The crowd is gay, loud, horny, and ravishing. The fajitas, unfortunately, are only so-so, but the margaritas are pure rocket fuel. It's a major pickup scene for those packing a condom or three.

DAMN THE MERLOT! FILL 'ER UP

It didn't take the success of Sideways to enlighten Angelenos to the delights of wine tastings, which go on all over the city. ***Silver Lake Wine,*** *which specializes in very small pressings (often under 2,000 bottles), has three: Sunday afternoons from 3pm and Monday and Thursday evenings starting at 5pm. The Sunday afternoons are the most formal, pairing hors d'oeuvres with the wines, either to complement or to offer regional flavors. On the far Eastside, visit* ***Colorado Wine Company,*** *which offers wine tastings twice a week, Sunday and Friday, and a by-the-glass wine bar the rest of the week.*

You can't go wrong... It's well worth walking into Union Station simply to check out the glorious Spanish Revival architecture of this classic L.A. building. The fact that **Traxx** is here just makes it all the better. It serves classic California cuisine, and while the menu is small, it's totally reliable. Fish is always a good choice here—and the surroundings are like nothing else in L.A. If you really want to touch L.A. noir and feel its slithery passage, come here for dinner. Close your eyes while you savor your merlot, and listen for the rumble of trains pulling into the station overhead. The food is much, much better than you'd expect, in a location that doesn't need any extra attractions. Over on Melrose Avenue, the veteran **Angeli Caffe** continues to deliver the goods—including great pastas and pizzas at reasonable prices and the best bread in town (okay, after Campanile). It's no longer the new kid on the block, but it's still noisy as hell—which indicates that, despite its age, Angeli remains a player. Timeless in its minimalist design and deceptively simple in its delivery, this is one of L.A.'s most overlooked Italian delights. I've never had a bad meal here, and, thanks to their cookbooks, I've even been able to duplicate the experience (almost) at home. Also in the Italian mode but on the Eastside is **Farfalla Trattoria,** my favorite midrange eatery for the past 10 years. It has better Italian food than I could make at home, caters to local celebs, and is affordable. Although the table positioning is a little too intimate, it's hard to find fault with one of the first good restaurants in the area—especially since it has continued to deliver reliably great pizzas, pastas, and inventive, fresh entrees for very reasonable prices. Plus, there's a great wine list (not quite so affordable, unhappily) and the 50-50 chance of seeing a celebrity.

The most affordable can't-go-wrong order is the Farfalla salad and pasta fagioli. Around the western edges of Los Angeles, the two Cuban/American eateries known as **Versailles** constitute a chain whose shackles you'd be well advised to slip into. The all-purpose marinade that soaks everything is definitely not for the faint of heart. It's a *muy fragrante* concoction of spices, olive oil, and enough raw garlic to wipe out an entire platoon of vampires. Both draw a diverse crowd, from working-class Cuban Americans to budding young Tinseltown tarts—er, I mean thespians. What they lack in fancy-schmancy ambience, these joints make up for in quality food. Echo Park's **Masa** is a wonderful blend of great pastries, Cuban-style bread (in homage to the former Cuban bakery that was in the location), and award-winning deep-dish pizzas—the best in L.A. say those who know. One of the couples that started the place hails from Chicago, hence the great pizzas.

Tacos, pupusas, tortillas... Like so much of L.A.'s good food, **Alegria on Sunset** occupies a tiny storefront in a strip mall, and, although the location screams poverty level, the food (and prices) are a step above. The mole sauce is the star of the show, black as night, thick and smoky, and with just the right amount of bittersweet bite. You can expect to see slumming celebs, grunge musicians, and goateed PAs waiting outside in the parking lot, anxiously watching to see when a table might be free. For the cheapest and best minimalist tacos in town, drop by **Tacos Mexico** in Echo Park. Like all the best eateries here, it's located in a funky strip mall you could easily miss unless you're looking. They're open 24 hours but Tuesday is when to come if you're broke and starving—palm-size tacos then are just 45¢ and the rest of the week a taco is just 85¢. If you're hankering for something a bit more sizable, try **La Taquiza,** near USC, which has a fabulous variation called the *mulita,* a taco sandwich that is considered one of the best examples of Mexican cuisine in the city. **La Fe**'s blue pleather booths used to be full of Mexican families snacking on empanadas and Salvadorian *pupusas,* but now they're just as likely filled with blond dreadlocked Echo Park hipsters. And if you're in the mood to make-your-own, try **Santa Fe Tortilleria,** just west on Sunset Boulevard, where both masa and tortillas are made fresh daily.

You can also get carnitas and menudo on the weekends or order tamales (at $1 each) for takeout.

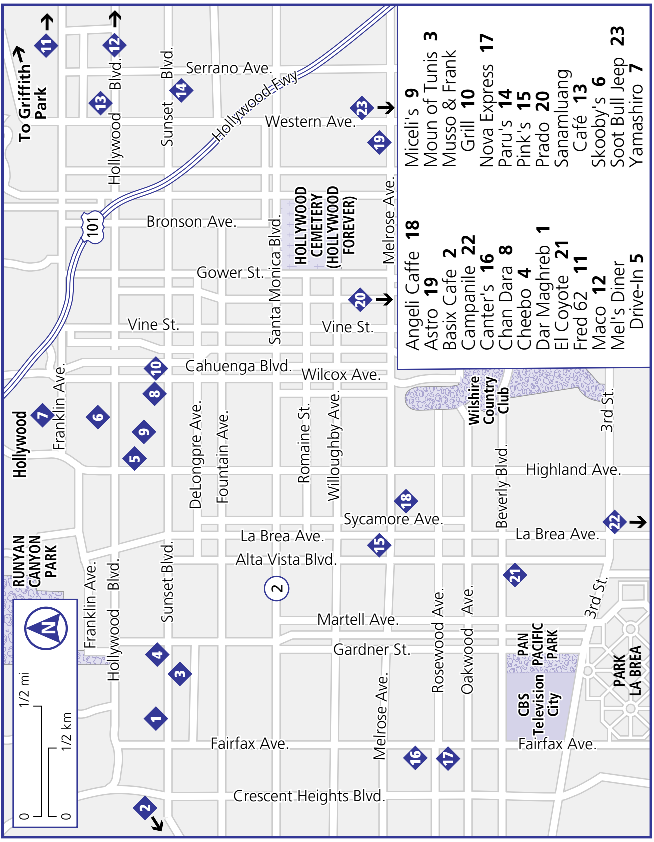
Cheap eats... In Los Feliz you'll find the tiny **Maco** storefront, tucked next to Skylight Books and the Los Feliz theaters. It features slightly greasy working-class Japanese food—for the local minimum-wage drones on this mini–hipster strip of Vermont, it's a godsend. The menu is as limited as the seating, but you sure can't complain about the prices. Where else can you feel totally full for under $4? You wouldn't ordinarily think of a Bunker Hill lawyer-corporate hangout like **McCormick and Schmick's** as a place to get bloated for pennies, but that's the glory of happy hour. This Library Tower institution is legendary among white-collar office workers Downtown. Every office drone in the financial center heads here eventually for the excellent $2 cheeseburgers, served in the evening before the dinner crowd comes in. You'll have to eat in a sea of cellphone-jabbering, Valley-bound commuter yuppies, but the great wine list more than makes up for it. If you're feeling expansive, the Pacific Northwestern–style seafood here is probably the best in downtown—after the Water Grill, anyway. Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger's Downtown outlet **Ciudad** offers tasty overpriced Latin food exhibiting influences from Cuba and Mexico to Brazil—but don't come for dinner, come for snacks! For under $20 you can get a moderate buzz from the excellent mojitos and feel almost full from the happy-hour appetizer menu that includes empanadas, tamales, and little beef thingies. Fred 62 would kill to be half as good as the **Eat Well Cafe,** which lives up to its name with typical diner cuisine tastily presented in more-healthy-than-not, tasty forms that come in huge portions.

What is it about fire stations that gets people salivating?... The guys in the tight pants sliding down the greased pole? The mouth unconsciously watering to quench the expected fire? It hardly matters. Downtown **Engine Company No. 28** is known for its comfort food—maybe that's why it's a favorite of stressed-out Downtown administrators. People come here for the history of the building as much as the food. Built in 1912 for $60,000, it was the most expensive station in the city. With its brick facade done in Renaissance Revival covering two-thirds of the three stories, archways, and terra-cotta cartouches bearing firefighter's tools in relief, it is a preservationist's wet dream. It's strictly comfort food inside (although some salads, like grilled ahi with a sesame-seed crust variation, do offer something that's not quite as weighty as the surroundings). Get two types of gas for the price of one at **Blue Flame,** the Gas Company cafeteria downtown. Its diet-conscious breakfast and lunch offerings include artisan breads from the La Brea Bakery, and it's manned by Mel Gibson's former chef, Elmer Liam. Just grab a tray and hit the buffet, which includes a daily "Nurture Our World" selection that is low-fat and low-calorie and has the nutrition information to prove it. The **Edendale Grill** in Silver Lake is another converted firehouse but here there's a blend of old Hollywood mixed in. The first movie studios were based in Edendale, just down the street. Mixville, the bar named after cowboy silent movie star Tom Mix, is located in the original fire-truck bay, beneath a pressed-tin ceiling and featuring a 38-foot-long mahogany bar. But don't just come for the martinis. The food is classic American—pork chops, sand dabs, steaks, spice-rubbed chicken, good salads—comforting without being confrontational. One of the owners started Millie's and trained under Alice Waters.

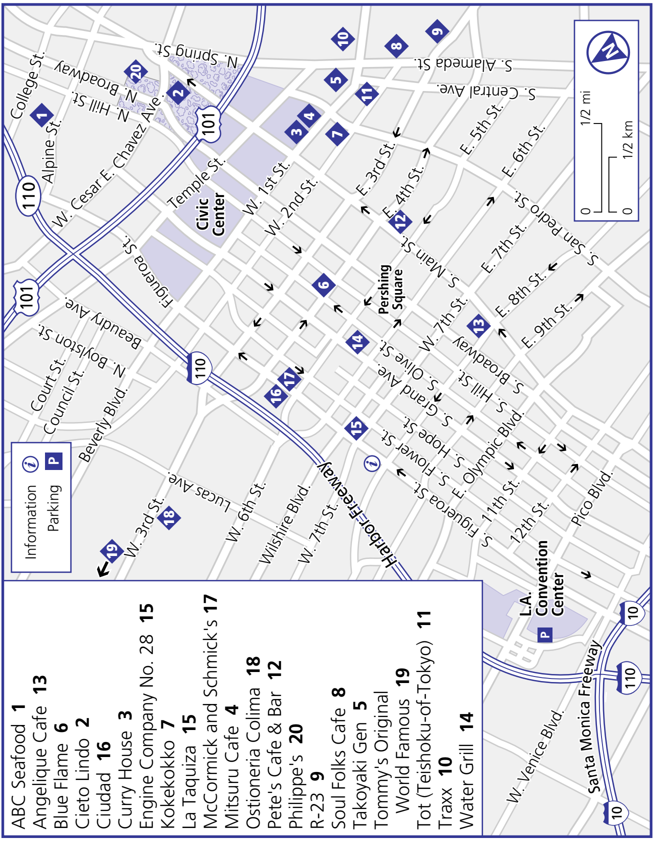
Good evening, Vietnam!... Ever since the fall of Saigon, Southern California has been a magnet for Vietnamese immigrants. Most settled in the San Fernando Valley or in Orange County and the few Vietnamese restaurants of any note were generally in Chinatown and primarily of the pho persuasion. Now thanks to places like **Gingergrass,** the distinctive delicate fusion of French sensibilities with *nam pla* and rice noodles has become almost mainstream. Gingergrass is in the heart of Silver Lake and modernly minimalist in decor. Tamarind-glazed chicken, smoked duck and mango spring rolls, shrimp adobo in garlic and coconut milk: It's all so fresh it snaps in your mouth right before the *nuoc cham* explodes on your tongue like a culinary IED. Best bet is Mako Mondays when for $35 you get a four-course, fixed-price family-style dinner.

Location, location, location... Part of the secret to living in L.A. is knowing about those places just up the block that you don't have to drive to—unlike all the other fools lined up waiting for the parking valet. Such as **Prado,** in the heart of Larchmont Village—a cozy little neighborhood that feels more like Glendale than the south Hollywood it is. Quite in keeping with the area, Prado is a more upscale version of chef Toribio Prado's popular **Cha Cha Cha** over in Silver Lake. Prado's cuisine is still So Cal–Caribbean—shrimp in black pepper sauce, blackened sea bass, Jamaican tamales—but the room is far more elegant than its funky-yet-charming Eastside cousin. For dessert, you can't go wrong with the raspberry red velvet cake. **Pete's Cafe & Bar** is basically pub food. Located neatly between Skid Row and the *Los Angeles Times,* this new addition to the old Banking District adds a touch of upscale civility to a neighborhood that is marginal at best. If the downtown loft scene ever does materialize, this is the kind of place that will thrive. Olvera Street isn't just an antiseptic unreal illusion of Tijuana—or Mexico, for that matter. But the place is worth a visit for its camp value if nothing else. For a quick bite, the taquito stand at the end of the street, **Cieto Lindo,** is my choice. **Soul Folks Cafe,** off the lobby of Bloom's General Store, has an absolute hands-down winner with Friday night's gumbo—although the catfish-chicken combo plate (with greens and corn cake) is also notable. Follow either one up with the peach cobbler and you're made in the shade.

Map 7: Hollywood Dining


To Griffith Park
Hollywood
RUNYAN CANYON PARK
Hollywood Blvd.
Sunset Blvd.
Hollywood Fwy
101
Serrano Ave.
Western Ave.
Bronson Ave.
Gower St.
Vine St.
Cahuenga Blvd.
Wilcox Ave.
Santa Monica Blvd.
HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY (HOLLYWOOD FOREVER)
Melrose Ave.
Franklin Ave.
DeLongpre Ave.
Fountain Ave.
Romaine St.
Willoughby Ave.
Highland Ave.
Sycamore Ave.
La Brea Ave.
Alta Vista Blvd.
2
Martell Ave.
Gardner St.
Rosewood Ave.
Oakwood Ave.
Beverly Blvd.
Wilshire Country Club
3rd St.
PAN PACIFIC PARK
CBS Television City
PARK LA BREA
Fairfax Ave.
Crescent Heights Blvd.
N
0
1/2 mi
1/2 km
Angeli Caffe 18
Astro 19
Basix Cafe 2
Campanile 22
Canter's 16
Chan Dara 8
Cheebo 4
Dar Maghreb 1
El Coyote 21
Fred 62 11
Maco 12
Mel's Diner Drive-In 5
Miceli's 9
Moun of Tunis 3
Musso & Frank Grill 10
Nova Express 17
Paru's 14
Pink's 15
Prado 20
Sanamluang Café 13
Skooby's 6
Soot Bull Jeep 23
Yamashiro 7

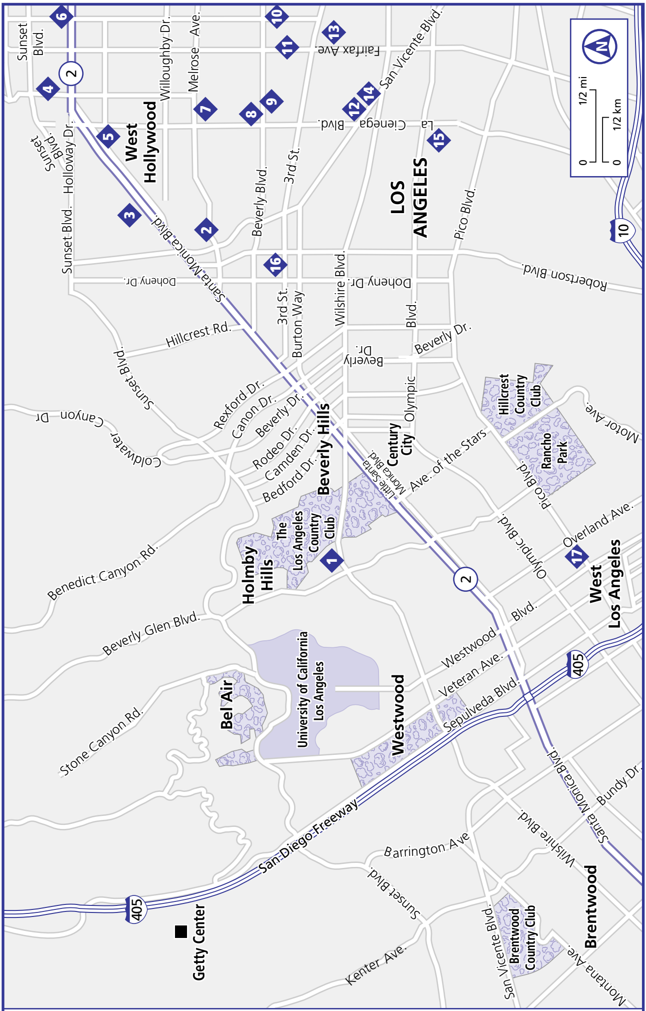
Map 8: Downtown Dining



College St.
Alpine St.
N. Broadway
N. Hill St.
N. Spring St.
W. Cesar E. Chavez Ave.
Temple St.
Civic Center
W. 1st St.
W. 2nd St.
E. 3rd St.
E. 4th St.
E. 5th St.
E. 6th St.
S. Alameda St.
S. Central Ave.
S. San Pedro St.
S. Main St.
Pershing Square
W. 7th St.
E. 7th St.
E. 8th St.
E. 9th St.
S. Broadway
S. Hill St.
S. Olive St.
S. Grand Ave.
S. Hope St.
S. Flower St.
S. Figueroa St.
E. Olympic Blvd.
11th St.
12th St.
Pico Blvd.
L.A. Convention Center
W. Venice Blvd.
Santa Monica Freeway
Harbor Freeway
Figueroa St.
Beaudry Ave.
N. Boylston St.
Court St.
Council St.
Beverly Blvd.
Lucas Ave.
W. 3rd St.
W. 6th St.
Wilshire Blvd.
W. 7th St.
101
110
10
1/2 mi
1/2 km
0
N
i Information
P Parking

ABC Seafood	1
Angelique Cafe	13
Blue Flame	6
Cieto Lindo	2
Ciudad	16
Curry House	3
Engine Company No. 28	15
Kokekokko	7
La Taquiza	15
McCormick and Schmick's	17
Mitsuru Cafe	4
Ostioneria Colima	18
Pete's Cafe & Bar	12
Philippe's	20
R-23	9
Soul Folks Cafe	8
Takoyaki Gen	5
Tommy's Original World Famous	19
Tot (Teishoku-of-Tokyo)	11
Traxx	10
Water Grill	14

Map 9: L.A.'s Westside & Beverly Hills Dining


West Hollywood
LOS ANGELES
Beverly Hills
Century City
Holmby Hills
Bel Air
Westwood
West Los Angeles
Brentwood
The Los Angeles Country Club
Hillcrest Country Club
Rancho Park
Brentwood Country Club
University of California Los Angeles
Getty Center
Sunset Blvd.
Holloway Dr.
Willoughby Dr.
Melrose Ave.
Fairfax Ave.
San Vicente Blvd.
La Cienega Blvd.
Beverly Blvd.
3rd St.
Santa Monica Blvd.
Doheny Dr.
Wilshire Blvd.
Burton Way
Hillcrest Rd.
Pico Blvd.
Robertson Blvd.
Olympic Blvd.
Beverly Dr.
Rexford Dr.
Canon Dr.
Rodeo Dr.
Camden Dr.
Bedford Dr.
Coldwater Canyon Dr.
Little Santa Monica Blvd.
Ave. of the Stars
Motor Ave.
Benedict Canyon Rd.
Beverly Glen Blvd.
Stone Canyon Rd.
Overland Ave.
Westwood Blvd.
Veteran Ave.
Sepulveda Blvd.
San Diego Freeway
Bundy Dr.
Barrington Ave.
Kenter Ave.
Montana Ave.
405
10
2
0
1/2 mi
1/2 km
N
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17

Anastasia's Asylum	**1**
Apple Pan	**17**
Dan Tana's	**3**
Dolce, Enoteca e Ristorante	**7**
El Coyote	**10**
Erewhon	**11**
Fatburger	**6**
Hugo's	**5**
India's Oven	**9**
The Ivy	**16**
King's Road Cafe	**8**
Kokomo Cafe	**13**
Marix Tex Mex Cafe	**4**
Matsuhisa	**12**
Tail o' the Pup	**14**
Urth Cafe	**2**
Versailles	**15**

The Index

$$$$	$40–$50
$$$	$30–$40
$$	$20–$30
$	under $20

Price categories reflect the cost of a three-course meal, not including drinks, taxes, and tip.

The following abbreviations are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express
DC	Diners Club
DISC	Discover
MC	MasterCard
V	Visa

ABC Seafood (p. 60) CHINATOWN *SEAFOOD* This longtime Chinatown veteran manages to last because of amazing dim sum and just-killed fish in Mandarin sauces.... *Tel 213/680-2887. 205 Ord St. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 8am–10pm. $$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Alegria on Sunset (p. 69) SILVER LAKE *MEXI-CALI* Don't be put off by the strip-mall location. This is one of the better Latino-inspired sit-down eateries in Silver Lake.... *Tel 323/913-1422. 3510 Sunset Blvd. No credit cards. Mon–Thurs 10am–10pm; Fri–Sat 10am–11pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Alexander's Brite Spot (p. 67) ECHO PARK *DINER* A greasy spoon right in the heart of Echo Park, the sort of diner that only locals, hipsters, and cops could love.... *Tel 213/484-9800. 1918 W. Sunset Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 6am–4am; Sat–Sun 7am–4am. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Anastasia's Asylum (p. 61) SANTA MONICA *COFFEEHOUSE* Not your typical coffee hangout for the uninspired. Strong coffee, strong Westside 'tude for real artists.... *Tel 310/394-7113. 1028 Wilshire Blvd. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 6:30am–1am; Sat–Sun 8am–1am. $*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Angeli Caffe **(p. 68)** HOLLYWOOD *ITALIAN* This restaurant is one of the reasons people came to Melrose back in the nu-wave days.... *Tel 323/936-9086. 7274 Melrose Ave. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Fri 11:30am–2pm and 5–10:30pm; Sat 11:30am–11:30pm; Sun 5–9:30pm. $$$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Angelique Cafe **(p. 59)** DOWNTOWN *FRENCH* Amazingly good and cheap outdoor-cafe French lunch. A lunch spot for those working downtown and the students and professors at the chic Southern California Institute of Architecture.... *Tel 213/623-8698. 840 Spring St. No credit cards. Mon–Fri 8am–3:30pm; Sat 8am–4pm. $*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Apple Pan **(p. 53)** WEST LOS ANGELES *DINER* This is an essential part of the L.A. adolescent experience. The food isn't superb, but the '50s-diner ambience is unquestionably real.... *Tel 310/475-3585. 10801 W. Pico Blvd. AE, MC, V. Tues–Thurs and Sun 11am-midnight; Fri–Sat 11am–1am. $$*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Astro Burgers **(p. 62)** HOLLYWOOD *BURGERS* This is one burger stand that's a huge favorite of vegetarians, with awesome garden burgers.... *Tel 323/469-1924. 5601 Melrose Ave. No credit cards. Sun–Thurs 7am–midnight; Fri–Sat 7am–1am. $*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Basix Cafe **(p. 67)** WEST HOLLYWOOD *CALI-ITALIAN* Good pizzas, salads, and not-too-distinctive Italian food for lipstick lesbians and their dates.... *Tel 323/848-2460. 8333 Santa Monica Blvd. AE, MC, V. Daily 7am–11pm. $$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Blue Flame **(p. 71)** DOWNTOWN *CAFE* Lower your gas bill by eating on their flame, but bring ID—they ask for it at the door for security. No dinner hours.... *Tel 213/244-2055. 555 W. 5th St., 2nd floor. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 6:30am–3pm. $*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Bob's Coffee & Doughnuts **(p. 61)** FAIRFAX *BAKERY* Farmer's Market staple, where celebs munch on donuts. Get them hot before 11:30am.... *Tel 323/933-8929. 6333 W. 3rd St. AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6:30am–9:30pm; Sun 7am–7pm. $*

Café Stella **(p. 59)** SILVER LAKE *FRENCH* A perfect French bistro set down in the heart of the Eastside. Not cheap but worth every penny (or sou).... *Tel 323/666-0265. 3932 Sunset Blvd. AE, MC, V. Reservations recommended. Tues–Sat 6–11pm. $$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Campanile **(p. 53)** HOLLYWOOD *CALI-MEDITERRANEAN* If you're looking for something that is true L.A., it just doesn't get much better than this.... *Tel 323/938-1447. 624 S. La Brea Ave. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm; Mon–Wed 6–10pm; Thurs–Sat 5:30–11pm; Sun 9:30am–1:30pm. $$$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Canter's **(p. 54)** WEST HOLLYWOOD *DELI-BAKERY* This kosher spot is open all night. It's been a Westside institution for successive generations of late-night revelers.... *Tel 323/651-2030. 419 N. Fairfax Ave. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 24 hr. $$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Casa Bianca **(p. 52)** EAGLE ROCK *PIZZA* Absolutely the best traditional pizza pie in Southern California.... *Tel 323/256-9617. 1650 Colorado Blvd. No credit cards. Tues–Thurs 4pm–midnight; Fri–Sat 4pm–1am. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Cha Cha Cha **(p. 52)** SILVER LAKE *CARIBBEAN* Cha Cha Cha is like a local church where we all come to worship before the gods of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and all the nameless sandbars of the Caribbean.... *Tel 323/664-7723. 656 N. Virgil Ave. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 9am–10pm. $$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Chan Dara **(p. 57)** HOLLYWOOD *THAI* Chan Dara stands out in the sea of Thai eateries engulfing L.A. The vegetarian stir-fries are good, the seafood dishes are great.... *Tel 323/464-8585. 1511 N. Cahuenga Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–10:30pm; Fri–Sat 11am–11pm. $$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Chango **(p. 66)** ECHO PARK *COFFEEHOUSE* This is the must-visit coffee shop if you want to absorb the Echo Park vibe. Low-key, low prices, alfresco seating.... *Tel 213/977-9161. 1559 Echo Park Ave. No credit cards. Mon–Sat 5:30am–8pm; Sun 6am–7pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Chao Praya **(p. 57)** HOLLYWOOD *THAI* This authentic Thai spot has been around since the '70s and draws a trendy crowd for standout barbecue chicken.... *Tel 323/466-6704. 6307 Yucca St. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5:30am–8pm; Sun 6am–7pm. $*

Cheebo **(p. 55)** HOLLYWOOD *PIZZA* How hungry are you? Three feet's worth? That's how the pizza comes at this unique Sunset Strip neighborhood pizzeria.... *Tel 323/850-7070. 7533 W. Sunset Blvd. AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 8am–11pm; Fri–Sat 8am–midnight. $$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Cieto Lindo **(p. 72)** DOWNTOWN *TACOS* Late-night spot for the best taquitos in town. Snappy and flavorful.... *Tel 213/687-4391. 23 Olvera St. No credit cards. Sun–Fri 9am–11pm; Sat 9am–midnight. $*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Ciudad **(p. 70)** DOWNTOWN *LATIN* The Two Hot Tamales girls' Downtown restaurant is a must-visit for the happy-hour appetizers menu.... *Tel 213/486-5171. 445 S. Figueroa Ave. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:45pm; Sun–Tues 5–8:45pm; Wed–Thurs 5–9:45pm; Fri–Sat 5–10:45pm. $$$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Coffee Table **(p. 66)** SILVER LAKE *COFFEEHOUSE* Loads of room, good large cups of coffee, and a great place for morning meetings.... *Tel 323/644-8111. 2930 Rowena Ave. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 7am–11pm; Fri–Sat 7am–midnight. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Colorado Wine Company **(p. 68)** EAGLE ROCK *WINE* A boutique wine store offering affordable tastings weekly as well as a daily wine bar, presenting pressings you've never heard of, from $4 a glass.... *Tel 323/478-1985. 2114 Colorado Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 11am–9pm; Sun 11am–5pm. $–$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Curry House **(p. 57)** LITTLE TOKYO *INDIAN* The food is a silly Japanese version of Indian curry, but somehow it's incredibly addictive.... *Tel 213/620-0855. 123 S. Onizuka St. (in Weller Court), Little Tokyo. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–9:30pm; Sat–Sun 11:30am–9:30pm. $*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

The Daily Grill **(p. 66)** LAX *AMERICAN* Hungry at LAX? Come here before you board. It's overpriced like all airport food but at least you'll enjoy what you eat.... *Tel 310/215-5180. 380 World Way. AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–10pm. $$–$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Dan Tana's **(p. 65)** WEST HOLLYWOOD *ITALIAN* With a history of Hollywood scandal and red meat, what's not to love? Posh and perfect for steaks and stars.... *Tel 310/275-9444. 9071 Santa Monica Blvd. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 5pm–1am. $$$$*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Dar Maghreb **(p. 56)** HOLLYWOOD *MEDITERRANEAN* You may not remember your meal, but you will know you had a good time. Belly dancing, sitting on the floor, eating with your fingers. Highly recommended for group extravaganzas.... *Tel 323/876-7651. 7651 Sunset Blvd. MC, V. Mon–Sat 6–11pm; Sun 5:30–11pm. $$$$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Dolce, Enoteca e Ristorante **(p. 55)** LOS ANGELES *ITALIAN/WINE BAR* Red carpet, red wine, red rope...green money to bribe your not-so-famous self in through the doors. It's all about the red vino and the stars who drink it.... *Tel 323/852-7174. 8284 Melrose Ave. AE, MC, V. Daily 6pm–midnight. $$$$*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Downbeat Cafe **(p. 61)** ECHO PARK *COFFEEHOUSE* This hip cafe is where the true starving artists go when they don't feel like starving.... *Tel 213/483-3955. www.thedownbeatcafe.com. 1202 N. Alvarado St. No credit cards. Daily 9am–10pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Duke's **(p. 53)** ECHO PARK *COFFEEHOUSE* Rock stars flock to this mother of all coffee shops on the Sunset Strip for hamburgers, classic and creative omelets, and other jumbo-size diner fare.... *Tel 310/652-3100. 8909 W Sunset Blvd. MC, V. Mon–Fri 7:30am–8:30pm; Sat–Sun 8am–3:30pm. $*

Dusty's **(p. 59)** ECHO PARK *FRENCH* A bistro for breakfasts and lunch. Quiet, unassuming, fresh, and vaguely arty.... *Tel 323/906-1018. 3200 W. Sunset Blvd. AE, MC, V. Daily 9am–5pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Eat Well Cafe **(p. 70)** SILVER LAKE *DINER* This very popular laid-back diner in Sunset Junction satisfies both your yin and yang tendencies, carnivores and vegetarians alike, from tofu to tri-tip, carrot juice to Kool-Aid. It's a major locals' hangout for breakfast and lunch..... *Tel 323/664-1624. 3916 W. Sunset Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 8am–3pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Edendale Grill **(p. 71)** SILVER LAKE *AMERICAN* Classic American cuisine, filtered through an Alice Waters perspective. Added bonus is the Mixville Bar.... *Tel 323/666-2000. www.edendalegrill.com. 2838 Rowena Ave. AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 5:30–10pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11:30pm. $$–$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

El Coyote **(p. 54)** LOS ANGELES *MEXICAN* Basically cheap, bland mush cleverly disguised as Mexican food. Come here to drink your dinner—don't be tempted by the food.... *Tel 323/939-2255. 7312 Beverly Blvd. AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–10pm; Fri–Sat 11am–11pm. $*

See Map 7 on p. 73.
See Map 9 on p. 75.

Electric Lotus **(p. 64)** LOS FELIZ *INDIAN* Visual overload, privacy booths, a soundtrack that ranges from live Indian music to techno, and some of the creamiest Indian fusion dishes in the city.... *Tel 323/953-0040. 4656 Franklin Ave. AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11:30am–midnight; Fri–Sat 11:30am–1am. $$–$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Encounter **(p. 66)** LAX *CALIFORNIA* The best reason to visit LAX when you're not taking off, it's a surreal '50s vision of space-age utopia.... *Tel 310/215-5151. 209 World Way. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Wed 11am–9pm; Thurs–Sat 11am–10pm. $$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Engine Company No. 28 **(p. 70)** DOWNTOWN *AMERICAN* Historic landmark serving comfort staples like chicken potpie and "firehouse specials"—firemen and pole not included.... *Tel 213/624-6996. 644 S. Figueroa St. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:15am–9pm; Sat–Sun 5–9pm. $–$$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Erewhon **(p. 64)** LOS ANGELES *DELI* Primarily a natural-foods grocery store, Erewhon also has a very respectable deli for takeout eats, perfect for a quick snack.... *Tel 323/937-0777. 7660 Beverly Blvd. AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 8am–10pm; Sun 9am–9pm. $*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Farfalla Trattoria **(p. 54)** LOS FELIZ *NORTHERN ITALIAN* Hold the hearty marinara but add just a dash of waitstaff snottiness. Quaint, cozy atmosphere perfect for impressing a date.... *Tel 323/661-7365. 1978 Hillhurst Ave. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–11pm; Sat noon–11pm; Sun 4–10:30pm. $$–$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Fatburger **(p. 55)** CITYWIDE *BURGERS* A wonderfully greasy slide straight to Cardiac Hell.... *Hollywood: Tel 323/663-3100; 1611 N. Vermont Ave. MC, V. Daily 9am–3am. Call for other locations. $*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Fatty's & Co. **(p. 63)** EAGLE ROCK *VEGAN* This hot spot on the Eastside is one of Eagle Rock's best restaurants, offering unique savory meals that will satisfy even meat-eaters....*Tel 323/254-8804. 1627 Colorado Blvd. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Wed–Fri 9am–3pm and 5–10pm; Sat 9am–10pm; Sun 9am–3pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Fred 62 **(p. 67)** LOS FELIZ *DINER* Bad diner food confusingly prepared and only delivered once it's nice and cold and the waiter has nothing better to do.... *Tel 323/664-0021. 1770 N. Vermont Ave. AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–8pm; Fri–Sat 11am–midnight. $$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

French Market Café **(p. 59)** VENICE *FRENCH* Where the real French people eat really casual, *mais oui*.... *Tel 310/577-9775. 2321 Abbott Kinney Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 7am–5pm; Sat–Sun 9am–4pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Gingergrass **(p. 71)** SILVER LAKE *VIETNAMESE* Noodles, pho, and spring rolls, elegantly prepared and affordably priced.... *Tel 323/644-1600. www.gingergrass.com. 2396 Glendale Blvd. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–3pm; Sun–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 5–10:30pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Hard Times Pizza Co. **(p. 55)** SILVER LAKE *PIZZA* The best by-the-slice pizza in Silver Lake.... *Tel 323/661-5656. 2664 Griffith Park Blvd. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm; Sun noon–11pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Hugo's **(p. 61)** WEST HOLLYWOOD *DINER* People who should know better flock here for breakfasts of Pasta Mama (scrambled eggs over pasta) and steaming coffee. This is a major entertainment-industry power spot, gay subset.... *Tel 323/654-3993. 8401 Santa Monica Blvd. AE, MC, V. Daily 8am–10pm. $$*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

India's Oven **(p. 63)** WEST LOS ANGELES *INDIAN* Cheap and incredibly delicious, with generous portions.... *Tel 323/936-1000; 7231 Beverly Blvd. Tel 310/207-5522; 111645 Wilshire Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 10:30am–10:30pm; Fri–Sat 10:30am–11pm. $*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

India Sweets and Spices **(p. 64)** CULVER CITY *INDIAN* It's hard to get any more authentic northern Indian lunch fare than this unless you get on a plane, and this is much, much cheaper.... *Tel 310/837-5286. 9049 Venice Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 9:30am–9:30pm groceries; 10:45am–9pm food only. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Inn of the Seventh Ray **(p. 64)** TOPANGA *ORGANIC* Exchange lots of your green for lots of theirs at this organic, hidden forest hide-away. Their big sensory experience is additive free but comes in tiny portions.... *Tel 310/455-1311. 128 Old Topanga Canyon Rd. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–3pm; Sat–Sun 10:30am–3pm; daily 5:30–9:30pm; Sun brunch 9:30am–3pm. $$–$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

The Ivy **(p. 67)** WEST LOS ANGELES *AMERICAN* Want to pretend you're a player? Come here, spend too much for mediocre food, and walk away pissed off.... *Tel 310/274-8303. 113 N. Robertson Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–10:30pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–11pm; Sun 10:30am–10:30pm. $$$$*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Johnny's Pastrami **(p. 55)** CULVER CITY *DELI* Go retro, to a time when cholesterol was inconsequential. The best late-night pastrami sandwich you'll ever have.... *Tel 310/397-6654. 4017 S.*

Sepulveda Blvd. No credit cards. Sun–Mon 10am–1am; Tues–Thurs 10am–2:30am; Fri–Sat 10am–3:30am. $

See Map 6 on p. 48.

King's Road Cafe **(p. 61)** WEST LOS ANGELES *CALIFORNIA* The panini sandwiches are the thing to eat at lunch, and the coffee is kick-ass strong. Highly reliable and very popular.... *Tel 323/655-9044. 8361 Beverly Blvd. MC, V. Mon–Sat 6am–10pm; Sun 7:30am–7pm. $*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Kokekokko **(p. 58)** LITTLE TOKYO *JAPANESE* On a par with the best sushi bars in the area—and about as expensive if you walk out full.... *Tel 213/687-0690. 360 E. 2nd St. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 6–10:30pm; Fri–Sat 6–11pm. $$$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Kokomo Cafe **(p. 61)** FAIRFAX *COFFEE/DINER* Dying for a nice hot johnnycake like mammy used to make? Come here for a Southern breakfast that will knock your socks off.... *Tel 323/933-0773. Farmer's Market, 6333 W. 3rd St. No credit cards. Mon–Thurs 8am–9pm; Fri–Sat 8am–10pm; Sun 8am–7pm. $$*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

La Fe **(p. 69)** ECHO PARK *MEXICAN* Fresh tortillas, *pupusas,* fried yucca, empanadas. Eat in or takeout.... *Tel 213/481-9896. 1525 W. Sunset Blvd. No credit cards. Daily 10am–9pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

La Taquiza **(p. 69)** EXPOSITION PARK *MEXICAN* You may come for a taco but try the mulita instead—described by one fan as "a sort of quesadilla on steroids." *L.A. Weekly* voted this small unassuming stand near USC as having the best Mexican food in the city.... *Tel 213/741-9795. 3009 S. Figueroa St. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 8:30am–midnight; Sat–Sun 9am–11pm. $*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Maco **(p. 70)** LOS FELIZ *JAPANESE* Totally quirky and still in business while the neighborhood gentrifies around it, this is working-class Japanese food, served at working-class prices. If there's no seat, just chill. Few customers linger over their meal.... *Tel 323/660-1211. 1820 N. Vermont Ave. No credit cards. Mon–Sat noon–9pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.
See Map 7 on p. 73.

Madame Matisse **(p. 52)** SILVER LAKE *ECLECTIC* Best for brunches, this is a lighter alternative to the gut-busting breakfasts at Millie's, almost next door.... *Tel 323/662-4862. 3536 W. Sunset Blvd. MC, V. Daily breakfast and lunch 7:30am–3:15pm; dinner Thurs–Sat 5–9:30pm. $–$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Mao's Kitchen **(p. 60)** VENICE *CHINESE* Join the late-night regime with the best Chinese country cuisine a fistful of cash will buy.... *Tel 310/581-8305. 1512 Pacific Ave. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–10:30pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Marix Tex Mex Café **(p. 67)** WEST HOLLYWOOD *TEX-MEX* Because it's in WeHo, the clientele is gay and gregarious.... *Tel 323/656-8800. 1108 N. Flores St. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm. $$*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Masa **(p. 69)** ECHO PARK *PIZZA/BAKERY* A short name but the deep-dish pizza is killer. My only complaint is that they're only open until 10pm. Good pastries and breads and a very nice alternative for weekend brunches.... *Tel 213/989-1558. 1800 W. Sunset Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 8am–10pm; Fri–Sat 8am–11pm. $–$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Matsuhisa **(p. 59)** BEVERLY HILLS *JAPANESE* Like Wolfgang Puck, chef Nobu Matsuhisa has redefined the way we taste things.... *Tel 310/659-9639. 129 N. La Cienega Blvd. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:45am–2:15pm; daily 5:45–10:15pm. $$$*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

McCormick and Schmick's **(p. 70)** DOWNTOWN *SEAFOOD* A lot of Bunker Hill office drones maintain that this is the best Northwest seafood in Downtown—better than the Water Grill. I come for the wonderful happy-hour specials.... *Tel 213/629-1929. 633 W. 5th St., Library Tower. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–10pm; Sat noon–10pm; Sun 4–9pm. $$$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Mel's Diner Drive-In **(p. 60)** HOLLYWOOD *DINER* It isn't really a drive-in. It's a stumble-in off Hollywood, in the Max Factor Building. Burgers, shakes, pie, eggs—it's your basic overbright faux-retro diner.... *Tel 323/465-2111. 1660 N. Highland Ave. MC, V. Sun–Thurs 6:30am–3pm; Fri–Sat 24 hr. $*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Miceli's **(p. 54)** HOLLYWOOD *ITALIAN* Family-owned authentic Italian from the old neighborhood that has been part of the Hollywood neighborhood for more than 50 years. A perfect spot for casual first-date amoré.... *Tel 323/466-3438. 1646 N. Las Palmas Ave. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–11pm; Fri 11:30am–midnight; Sat–Sun 4–11pm. $–$$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Millie's **(p. 52)** SILVER LAKE *DINER* Once merely a humble breakfast diner, this has become the epicenter of Silver Lake cool—the place where struggling musicians work part-time slinging

Devils Mess Eggs to cover demo costs.... *Tel 323/664-0404. 3524 W. Sunset Blvd. MC, V. Mon–Fri 7:30am–3:30pm; Sat–Sun 7:30am–4pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Mitsuru Cafe **(p. 58)** LITTLE TOKYO *JAPANESE* I wanna imagawayaki. Now! They have other things, too, but this odd, sweet, red-bean-filled pancake is the only thing I ever get here. Two will fill you up just fine.... *Tel 213/613-1028. 117 Japanese Village Plaza Mall. AE, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 11am–9pm; Sun 11am–7pm. $$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Moun of Tunis **(p. 56)** HOLLYWOOD *NORTH AFRICAN* Tunisian finger food combined with belly dancers and a party atmosphere that only the North Africans can carry off with such style.... *Tel 323/874-3333. 7445½ Sunset Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 5:30–11pm. $$$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Musso & Frank Grill **(p. 53)** HOLLYWOOD *AMERICAN* The menu is absurdly long, the waiters notoriously snotty, the food too bland and overcooked. But you have to come here at least once just to say you've been.... *Tel 323/467-7788. 6667 Hollywood Blvd. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 11am–11pm. $$$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Nova Express **(p. 62)** HOLLYWOOD *COFFEEHOUSE* The mother ship of late-night bites and sights; a campy sci-fi experience open until 4am. After that, most patrons page Scotty to beam them up.... *Tel 323/658-7533. 426 N. Fairfax Ave. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 7am–2pm; Fri–Sun 7am–4am. $*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Ostioneria Colima **(p. 66)** WEST LOS ANGELES *SEAFOOD* Raw oysters and fried seafood for just pennies on the half shell. One of Downtown's hidden treasures. Zero ambience but a great meal.... *Tel 213/482-4152. 1465 W. 3rd St. No credit cards. Daily 9am–8pm. $*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Paru's **(p. 62)** HOLLYWOOD *INDIAN/VEGETARIAN* A major find for vegans and vegetarians. Wonderfully tasty, with a friendly atmosphere.... *Tel 323/661-7600. 5140 Sunset Blvd. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 4–11pm; Sat–Sun 1–10pm. $$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Pete's Cafe & Bar **(p. 72)** DOWNTOWN *AMERICAN* Dark wood and dark jazz on the dark streets of Downtown, alas, with a stuffed-suit feel.... *Tel 213/617-1000. 400 S. Main St. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2pm; Sat 11am–2pm; Sun 11am–1pm. $$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Philippe's **(p. 52)** DOWNTOWN *AMERICAN* There's sawdust on the floor, decent wines on the wine list, and a whole variety of meats you can get dipped before they're slopped onto your soggy bun. Plus great breakfasts.... *Tel 213/628-3781. 1001 N. Alameda St. No credit cards. Daily 6am–10pm. $$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Pink's **(p. 56)** HOLLYWOOD *HOT DOGS* Here's where you come when you're dying for nasty meat whose genealogy you don't want to know anything about.... *Tel 323/931-4223. 709 N. La Brea Ave. No credit cards. Sun–Thurs 9:30am–2am; Fri–Sat 9:30am–3am. $*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Prado **(p. 72)** LARCHMONT VILLAGE *CARIBBEAN* If you like sister restaurant Cha Cha Cha's Caribbean choices, then for sure come here. Crab cakes, green tamales, good wines.... *Tel 323/467-3871. 244 N. Larchmont Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–3pm; Mon–Fri 5:30–10pm; Sat–Sun 4:30–10:30pm. $$$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Prasada **(p. 63)** SILVER LAKE *VEGAN* This new vegan-friendly breakfast-lunch restaurant may be small but they've gotten a very large following. One of the few places around Sunset Junction that offers a grease-free breakfast.... *Tel 323/644-0068. 3818 W. Sunset Blvd. AE, MC, V. Daily 8am–11pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Psychobabble **(p. 61)** LOS FELIZ *COFFEEHOUSE* Not much babble, but lots of aspiring and freelance writers jabbering away on their cellphones and ticking away at their laptops.... *Tel 323/664-7500. 1866 N. Vermont Ave. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 7am–2am. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Rambutan Thai **(p. 57)** ECHO PARK *THAI* Very unassuming in location but one of those strip-mall treasures that you'll remember for years. Work the grill.... *Tel 213/273-8424. 2835 W. Sunset Blvd. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–11pm; Fri–Sat 5pm–midnight; Sun 5–11pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Randy's Donuts **(p. 60)** INGLEWOOD *DONUTS* Home of the legendary 60-ft. donut, off La Cienega Blvd.... *Tel 310/645-4707. 805 W Manchester Blvd. No credit cards. Open 24 hr. $*

Real Food Daily **(p. 63)** SANTA MONICA *VEGAN* No Frankenfood, no health posers, but lots of dimly lit warm tones and calm people without the Westside attitude.... *Tel 310/451-7544. 514 Santa Monica Blvd. AE, DC, MC, V. 11:30am–10pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse **(p. 62)** BEVERLY HILLS *STEAK* This corn-fed American Prime moo-meat is so juicy and tender you'll forget about that New Year's resolution..... *Tel 310/859-8744. www.ruthschris.com. 224 S. Beverly Dr. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri 5–10:30pm; Sat 4:30–10:30pm; Sun 4:30–9:30pm. $$$$*

R-23 **(p. 58)** DOWNTOWN *JAPANESE* This major oasis for the Downtown artists community features great sushi from really fresh fish, and a *très* boho decor. Highly recommended.... *Tel 213/687-7178. www.r23.com. 923 E. 3rd St. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 10am–9:45pm. $$$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Saladang **(p. 56)** PASADENA *THAI* Very good nouvelle Thai, as gourmet as you're going to find on this side of the ocean.... *Tel 626/793–8123. 363 S. Fair Oaks Ave. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Daily 10am–9:45pm. $$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Sanamluang Café **(p. 60)** HOLLYWOOD *NOODLES/THAI* The joint to go to after hours in search of a late-night bite or soon-to-be-had hangover helper in a bowl. Hearty, spicy noodle bowls as colorful as those around you.... *Tel 323/660-8006. 5170 Hollywood Blvd. No credit cards. Daily 10am–3am. $*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Santa Fe Tortilleria **(p. 69)** ECHO PARK *MEXICAN* Fresh masa, tortillas, tamales-to-go, carnitas, and menudo. An essential resource for hosting your own Cinco de Mayo party.... *Tel 213/ 483-3180. 1715 W. Sunset Blvd. No credit cards. Mon–Fri 7am–5pm; Sat–Sun 7am–4pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Shin **(p. 58)** LOS FELIZ *JAPANESE* The fish is fresh, the presentation perfect. I have my gripes, but it's still my favorite local sushi bar.... *Tel 323/664-1891. 1972 Hillhurst Ave. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 5:30–10:30pm; Sun 5:30–10pm. $$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Silver Lake Wine **(p. 68)** SILVER LAKE *WINE* A boutique wine store right across the street from Gingergrass restaurant. They have a highly varied selection from small-press wineries and present three wine tastings a week.... *Tel 323/662-9024. 2395 Glendale Blvd. AE, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Wed 11am–9pm; Thurs–Sat 11am–10pm. $–$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Skooby's **(p. 56)** HOLLYWOOD *HOT DOGS* Reportedly the *best* hot dog in the city.... *Tel 323/468-3647. 6654 Hollywood Blvd. No credit cards. Sun–Thurs noon–10pm; Fri–Sat noon–2:30am. $*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Sompun (p. 57) SILVER LAKE *THAI* Not the most glamorous Thai restaurant you'll find, and not the rock-bottom cheapest either, but this is honest home cooking.... *Tel 323/661-5350. 4156 Santa Monica Blvd. MC, V. Wed–Mon 11am–10pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Soot Bull Jeep (p. 62) KOREATOWN *KOREAN* This unassuming Korean barbeque joint is the real deal.... *Tel 213/387-3865. 3136 W. 8th St. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm. $$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Soul Folks Cafe (p. 72) DOWNTOWN *SOUL FOOD* Very tasty, and lighter and more reasonable than you'd expect. No dinners on the weekends.... *Tel 213/613-0381. 714 Traction Ave. (inside Bloom's General Store). AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 8am–4:30pm. $$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Tacos Mexico (p. 69) ECHO PARK *TACOS* The closest thing you'll get to a great cheap, freshly prepared taco. They're tiny but at 45¢ each on Tuesday, you can afford to get a half dozen.... *Tel 213/413-4823. 1538 Glendale Blvd. No credit cards. Sun–Thurs 8am–1am; Fri–Sat 8am–4am. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Tail o' the Pup (p. 56) WEST HOLLYWOOD *HOT DOGS* Dining at the Tail is a very L.A. moment, something that must be captured on film or video—otherwise it's just not worth the heartburn.... *Tel 310/652-4517. 329 N. San Vicente Blvd. No credit cards. Mon–Sat 6am–5pm; Sun 8am–4pm. $*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Taix (p. 59) ECHO PARK *FRENCH* French country cuisine, a 600-item wine list, and a panoply of local alt-culture performers. A wonderful blend of retro and so-new-millennium.... *Tel 213/484-1265. 1911 Sunset Blvd. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–10pm; Sat noon–11pm; Sun noon–9pm. $$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Tantra (p. 64) SILVER LAKE *INDIAN* A great Indian place to align your chakras with a little Bombay in the heart of hip Sunset Junction.... *Tel 323/663-9090. 3705 Sunset Blvd. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 6pm–1am. $$–$$$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Tommy's Original World Famous (p. 55) DOWNTOWN *BURGERS* Like Communion, you must pass the chili-cheese-meat Host into your gut in order to be redeemed in the City of the Angels. Otherwise you're just pretending.... *Tel 213/389-9060. 2575 Beverly Blvd. No credit cards. Daily 24 hr. $*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Tot (Teishoku-of-Tokyo) (p. 58) LITTLE TOKYO *JAPANESE* This is one of the best new arrivals in Little Tokyo in some time. It features inventively prepared Japanese standards that have an overlay of California cuisine. A little pricey, but worth it.... *Tel 213/680-0344. 345 E. 2nd St. AE, DISC, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm. $$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Traxx **(p. 68)** DOWNTOWN *CALIFORNIA* Excellent gourmet cuisine dished up in the classic noir surroundings of Union Station.... *Tel 213/625-1999. 800 N. Alameda St. (inside Union Station). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm and 5:30–9pm; Sat 5–9pm. $$$$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

Urth Cafe **(p. 63)** WEST HOLLYWOOD *VEGAN* Über-posh vegan desserts, coffee, and herbal tea.... *Tel 310/659-0628. 8565 Melrose Ave. AE, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6:30am–midnight; Sun 7am–midnight. $*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Vermont **(p. 65)** LOS FELIZ *AMERICAN* It's your basic American ho-hum food: overpriced, bland, and served on linen.... *Tel 323/661-6163. www.vermontrestaurantonline.com. 1714 N. Vermont Ave. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–3pm and 5:30–10pm; Sat–Sun 5:30–11pm. $$$*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

Versailles **(p. 69)** CULVER CITY/CENTURY CITY *CUBAN* These highly reliable Cuban restaurants can be a little greasy, but that's the appeal. The roasted chicken is outstanding.... *Tel 310/558-3168; 10319 Venice Blvd., Culver City; $$. Tel 310/289-0392; 1415 S. La Cienega Blvd.; Los Angeles. AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–10pm. $*

See Map 9 on p. 75.

Water Grill **(p. 66)** DOWNTOWN *SEAFOOD* When it comes to freshly shucked seafood, there's nothing to match this classy downtown mecca for lovers of the bivalve and all its cousins.... *Tel 213/891-0900. 544 S. Grand Ave. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–9pm; Sat 5–9pm; Sun 4:30–8:30pm. $$$$*

See Map 8 on p. 74.

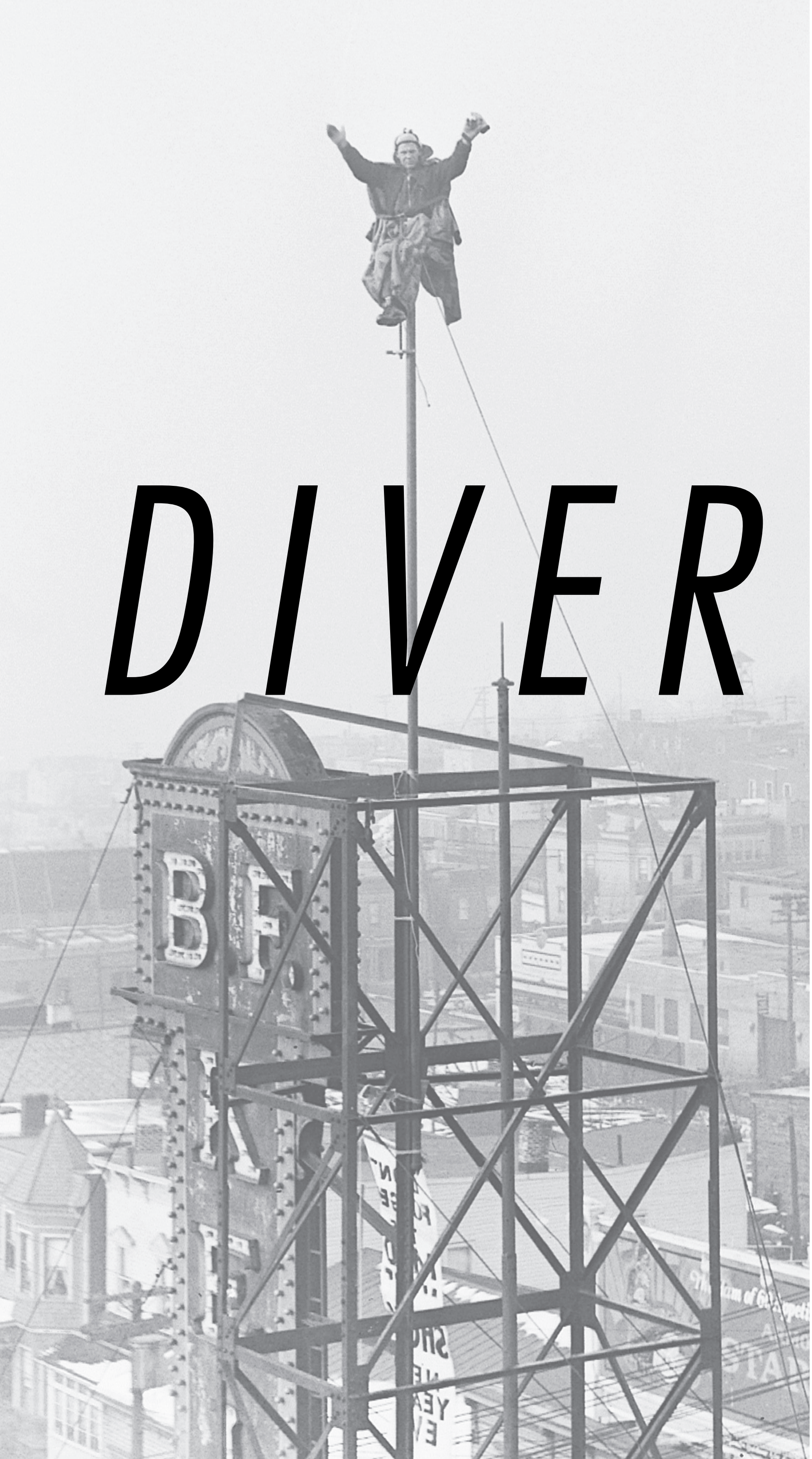
Yamashiro **(p. 54)** HOLLYWOOD *FUSION* You come here for the fabulous view, not for the mediocre food and watery drinks.... *Tel 323/466-5125. 1999 N. Sycamore Ave. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 5:30–10:30pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11:30pm. $$$*

See Map 7 on p. 73.

Yuca's Hut **(p. 51)** LOS FELIZ *BURRITOS* Quite simply, this is the best and most reliable food you're likely to find in L.A.... *Tel 323/662-1214. 2056 N. Hillhurst Ave. No credit cards. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm. $*

See Map 6 on p. 48.

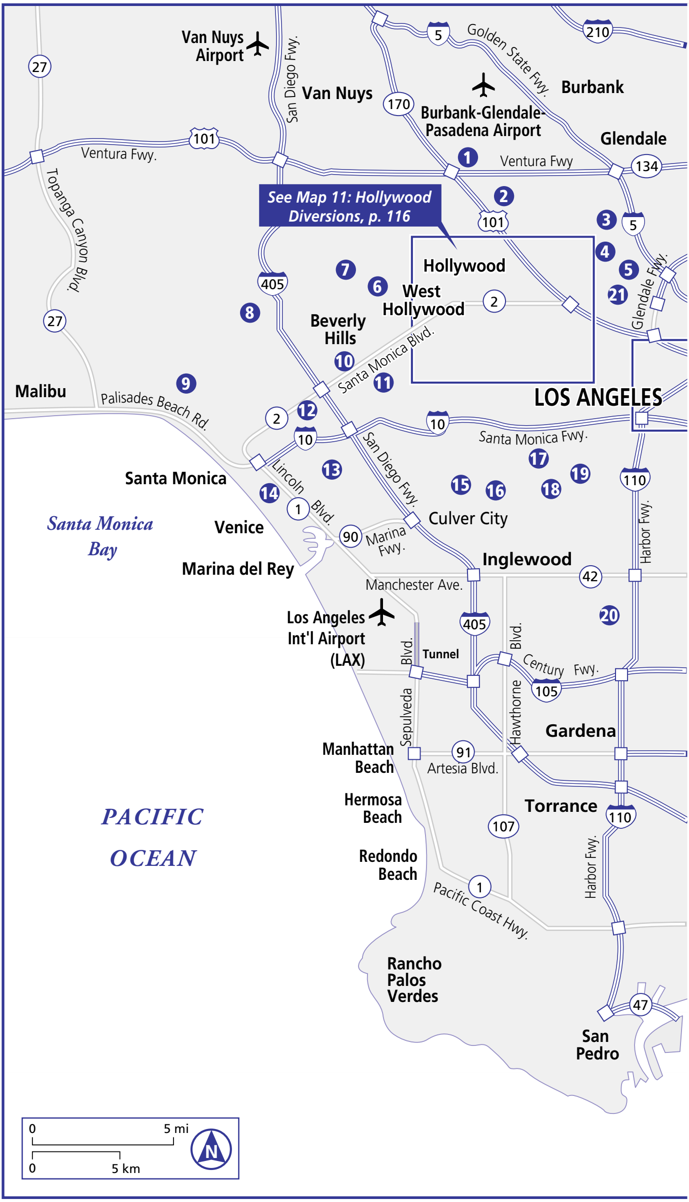
DIVER

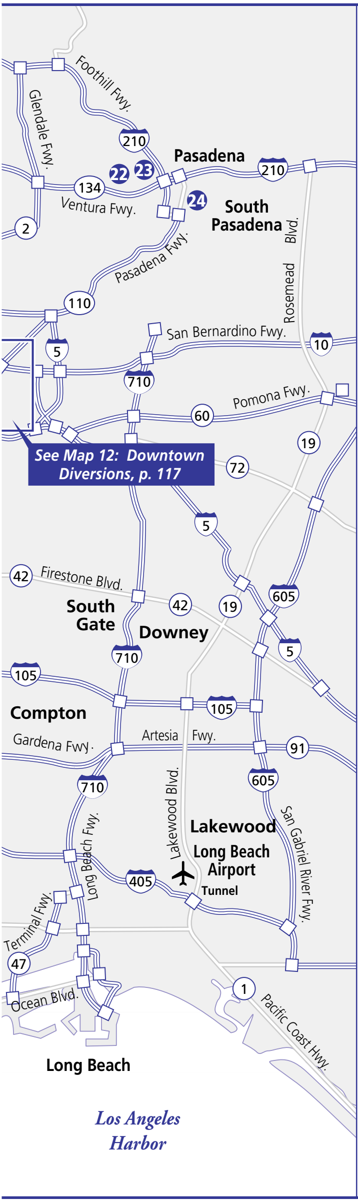


SIONS

3

Map 10: Los Angeles Diversions Orientation


Van Nuys Airport
Van Nuys
San Diego Fwy.
Golden State Fwy.
Burbank
Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport
Glendale
Ventura Fwy.
Ventura Fwy
Topanga Canyon Blvd.
See Map 11: Hollywood Diversions, p. 116
Hollywood
West Hollywood
Beverly Hills
Santa Monica Blvd.
Glendale Fwy.
LOS ANGELES
Malibu
Palisades Beach Rd.
Santa Monica Fwy.
Santa Monica
Lincoln Blvd.
San Diego Fwy.
Santa Monica Bay
Venice
Marina del Rey
Marina Fwy.
Culver City
Inglewood
Harbor Fwy.
Manchester Ave.
Los Angeles Int'l Airport (LAX)
Tunnel
Sepulveda Blvd.
Hawthorne Blvd.
Century Fwy.
Gardena
Manhattan Beach
Artesia Blvd.
Hermosa Beach
Torrance
Redondo Beach
Pacific Coast Hwy.
PACIFIC OCEAN
Rancho Palos Verdes
San Pedro
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
0 5 mi
0 5 km
N


Foothill Fwy.
Glendale Fwy.
210
Pasadena
22
23
210
134
Ventura Fwy.
24
South Pasadena
2
Rosemead Blvd.
Pasadena Fwy.
110
San Bernardino Fwy.
10
5
710
Pomona Fwy.
60
19
72
5
42
Firestone Blvd.
South Gate
42
19
605
Downey
710
5
105
105
Compton
Gardena Fwy.
Artesia Fwy.
91
605
710
Lakewood Blvd.
Lakewood
Long Beach Airport
Long Beach Fwy.
San Gabriel River Fwy.
405
Tunnel
Terminal Fwy.
47
Ocean Blvd.
1
Pacific Coast Hwy.
Long Beach
Los Angeles Harbor

See Map 12: Downtown Diversions, p. 117

Art Center	**23**
Bergamot Station Arts Center	**12**
Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center	**14**
Billy Shire Fine Arts	**15**
The Dance Collective	**18**
Descanso Gardens	**22**
Fifth Street Dick's Coffee	**19**
Getty Center	**8**
Griffith Observatory Satellite	**5**
Hollyhock House	**21**
Holy Cross Cemetery and Mausoleum	**10**
Huntington Gardens	**24**
KCET	**4**
Los Angeles Museum of Television and Radio	**7**
Los Angeles Zoo	**3**
MAK	**6**
Museum of Jurassic Technology	**16**
NBC Television	**2**
Santa Monica Museum of Art	**13**
Track 16 Gallery	**12**
Universal CityWalk	**1**
Warner Brothers Studios	**1**
Watts Towers Arts Center	**20**
West Adams Heritage Association	**17**
Westwood Village Memorial Park	**11**
Will Rogers State Park	**9**

San Fernando Valley
Pasadena & Environs
Hollywood
Downtown
Santa Monica & the Beaches
L.A.'s Westside & Beverly Hills
LAX
PACIFIC OCEAN
Long Beach

Basic Stuff

For those of you who think L.A. is a culturally vapid wasteland where "nobody walks," just consider what you watched on television last night. That's L.A., good, bad, ugly, sunny, smoggy, stupid, high-concept, shallow, and working on a very bad sunburn that will result in a nasty melanoma in 12 years. We've got loads of weird and fun places to make that screamer boss an almost tolerable presence. Am I right? Consider the reality. The beach is sick, the freeways clogged, and everybody has a gun. We need a place to relax, maybe more than most people.

Getting Your Bearings

Okay, first of all, you've got to know where the hell you are. (*Why* is another question, covered in volume II—"Ontology and Automology.") Unlike places like Manhattan, where the streets and avenues obey almost logical rules, L.A. is a city that tries unsuccessfully to fit itself to a grid. It's curved into the Pacific, humpbacked, so that north is not really north. Its south meanders all over the place, and east-west demarcations are local municipality decisions. In New York City, people orient themselves by their subway/train stops; in L.A. it's all freeway-related. Basically the Santa Monica Freeway (the 10) runs east-west, connecting Downtown to Santa Monica and the beach. The Hollywood Freeway (the 101) runs north-south, winding through Downtown, Hollywood, and into the Valley before it changes character. These are your two most important freeway lines. From here, everything becomes much easier. The major boulevards (Venice, Pico, Olympic, Wilshire, Beverly, Melrose, Santa Monica, Sunset, Hollywood, Franklin) run east-west. They are crossed north-south by an assortment of avenues, streets, and boulevards: Vermont, Western, Normandie, Vine, Highland, La Brea, Crescent Heights, La Cienega, Fairfax, Robertson. Get these compass points/paths in the proper sequence, and you're ready to roll.

The Lowdown

We are unreal... That's what we do. The 2003 Air Guitar Championships were held here and they *sold out.* Before computerized special effects, it was all about giant facades, palaces carved out of foam. For full immersion into the world of make-believe, come to **Hollywood Boulevard**

between Las Palmas Avenue and Orange Drive. Here you'll find the **Egyptian Theatre,** built in 1922 and inspired by the discovery of King Tut's tomb. It was renovated in 1998 and is the home of L.A.'s premier film appreciation association, American Cinematheque. The films screened here are *not* the fare you'll find at your local multiplex. The experience is on a par with the best meal in town. Across the boulevard is **Grauman's Chinese Theatre.** It was built in 1927 and has long been the major draw for tourists eager to compare their hand- and footprints with those of actors long gone. On the same side of the street is the **Hollywood Wax Museum** with 220 statues. The major new addition to this area has been the **Hollywood & Highland** retail complex, anchored by the Kodak Theater, where the actors are handed their Oscars. Up the escalator is a large courtyard that is flanked by two giant white elephants, replicas from D. W. Griffith's 1916 epic *Intolerance.* This is make-believe writ large, as you would want. **Olvera Street** in Downtown, just across from Union Station, is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city, dating back to when this was a pueblo, not a city. Here you'll find the **Avila Adobe,** the oldest surviving residence, dating from 1818. This was a neighborhood of manufacturing until a civic activist transformed the pedestrian-only walkway into a simulacrum of Mexico, complete with piñatas, ponchos, maracas, dolls, silver jewelry, low-fire pottery, and rebozos. Still, for all its fakery, Olvera Street retains an innocence that is charming—which is maybe why for years this was where visiting politicos and bureaucratic movers-and-shakers came to make deals and trade gossip. The big days for Olvera Street are Easter, Cinco de Mayo (May 5), Day of the Dead (Nov 1–2), and Christmas.

Wild kingdom... The **Los Angeles Zoo** has had its ups and downs. At one time the perimeter fence was so full of holes that coyotes were coming in to snack on the flamingos, while the animal enclosures had deteriorated to the point where they were considered "unsafe" for keepers and animals, and the various water areas were universally slimy and fetid with muck. In 1995 the U.S. Department of Agriculture cited the zoo for hundreds of cleanliness and safety violations, forcing it to clean up its act. Today the zoo is once again a place fit to take the kids. Meanwhile, a whole generation of animals that were never lucky enough to make it to the L.A. Zoo can be examined—or at least their remains can—at the **La Brea Tar Pits and George C. Page Museum.** In the stinky black pools in front of the museum, a family of fiberglass mastodons is getting a little lesson in survival. You can idle by and say thanks to their real-life counterparts for decomposing in such a way that you could have gas in your car. Inside the well-laid-out museum, you'll find hundreds of dire wolves' skulls arranged around the interior, like some Melrose hipster's idea of Goth wallpaper. And in the back, safely behind glass, you'll see living researchers sifting through zillions of tiny bones in the paleontology laboratory. My favorite exhibit is a holographic display of La Brea Woman, a 9,000-year-old female (who still looks pretty good, considering), segueing from bone to flesh.

Ethnics 'R' Us... When gangbangers ask a stranger in the 'hood, "Where you from?" they're not talking about ethnic background or your ancestral tree, and there's (unfortunately) no correct answer. For a less threatening view of who we are and why we're all together here, however, there are a slew of museums around the city that detail the full range of the immigrant experience, legal and otherwise. The **Museum of the American West** is a good place to start, since it represents the conquerors—the ones who lynched, deported, and decimated as best they could everyone who was here before them. (This country was built on ethnic cleansing, bub.) The museum is devoted to the story of the exploration, expansion, and conquest of the West by those saddleback invaders from the East. That's right: Cowboy Culture and all its attendant tools for torturing horses, cattle, and people. The museum has probably the largest collection of Western memorabilia in all of California, including a very nice assortment of Colt firearms. In the same vein, but dedicated to the ancestors who were on the receiving end of those Colts, is the **Southwest Museum.** This is the best place to go in L.A. if you want to better understand and appreciate the culture of the American Indian. The museum covers Native American history from Alaska to South America and also has an extensive collection of pre-Columbian pottery and textiles, as well as Hispanic folk and decorative arts. Of special local interest are the exhibits dealing with the Gabrielino Indians, those poor people who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time—right in the sights of the Spanish explorers and their missionary sidekicks who came here in the 17th century looking for gold and souls to save. Which brings us to **El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument,** located at the top of Olvera Street on the site of the Old Plaza, around which the original pueblo settlement was built. The oldest building here is the Old Plaza Church, built in the 1820s and still in use. Also check out the Avila Adobe structure, halfway down Olvera Street. It's the oldest existing residence in L.A. and has been refurbished to resemble the high-end living conditions a wealthy California family of the time (think Zorro) might have enjoyed. Farther south (and further forward in time) is the equally new (but much better funded) **Japanese American National Museum,** dedicated to the history and experiences of the Japanese immigrants who were so miserably treated by the U.S. government during World War II. Descriptions of the concentration camps used during the war to "relocate" the suspected potential traitors are chilling. The raw open slats of a reassembled Wyoming concentration camp, which housed Americans of Japanese extraction, are reminder enough of the crude and freezing conditions its unjustly interred inmates were forced to endure.

Navigating the Getty... The **Getty Center** is without question the most beautiful public space in Los Angeles. And it's free year-round—a fact that's especially appreciated at a time when most museums are charging up to $15 for special showings. The Getty charges only for parking, and the crowds from a few years ago have diminished greatly, although you still need to make a parking reservation if you want to come before 4pm. Of course, if there's a highly publicized opening here, reserve well in advance. Personally I come here for the Central Garden, which improves on every visit. Designed by artist Robert Irwin, the garden winds along the side of the natural ravine the Getty straddles, its tree-lined walkways paralleling a stream and willowy grasses. There's a pool at the bottom with azaleas floating on the surface. Down here you find specialty gardens, plantings, and color like you've never seen. A favorite time of arrival is late afternoon, when the deepening light bounces off the white travertine walls, the sunset to the west glows with smog, and below you crawl the bumper-to-bumper car lights on the 405—lots of folks going nowhere, slowly. What's inside? Lots of pretty pictures and antiquities from all over the world, from classical to modern. But the best art statement may be the museum space itself, high above the freeway. It's a rare view of L.A. that you can only get here.

Wall eyes... There was a time when the mural was a highly celebrated Angeleno art form; murals graced the walls of warehouses, hotels, corner grocery stores, and freeway underpasses, many of them reflections of Chicano and Latino pride. The apex of L.A. muralism was during the 1984 Olympics, when you couldn't pass a wall without seeing some glorious hypnotic, surreal interpretation of what it means to be an Angeleno. Then the taggers took over and it became a game between city censors and kids who probably partied with the muralists' younger brothers. While most of the Olympic murals are gone, some of the Chicano classics remain: ***Doliente de Hidalgo*** (by Willie Herron; City Terrace Ave. at Miller St., City Terrace); ***La Ofrenda*** (by Yreina Cervantes; 2nd St. at Toluca St. Bridge, Westlake); and ***Resurrection of the Green Planet*** (by Ernesto de la Loza; Breed St. at Cesar Chavez Ave., Boyle Heights). If you're interested in something a bit more current, grittier, and urban, check out the Poetry Wall, aka the Berlin Wall, at Crocker and 5th streets. For nearly half a block on the west side of 5th Street, a wall is covered in multicolored verse laid down over 4 years, between 1989 and 1993, by the Homeless Writers Coalition. You won't find a better illustration of what it means to be homeless in L.A. **SPARC** (the Social and Public Art Resource Center) works with hundreds of community groups to promote and protect their artwork, with an emphasis on socially aware, ethnically diverse statements. The organization's best-known project is the ***Great Wall of Los Angeles,*** a half-mile-long mural that depicts the history of California from the perspective of women and people of color. Done on a section of wall in the Tujunga Wash drainage canal in Van Nuys, it's a bit of a drive, but well worth the trip. The most glorious tagger art in the city is visible from the L.A. River

Bike Path, covering the river's concrete banks from Burbank to Los Feliz.

New downtown landmarks... There are 15 manifestations of the Virgin in statuettes around the grounds of the new $190-million **Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels,** but here in "Sin City," you'd probably be hard pressed to find any real live manifestations of that kind of purity in the pews. Designed by Spanish architect José Rafael Moneo, this significant downtown landmark on a 2.5-acre site overlooks the Hollywood Freeway, and its 60-foot cross is visible for miles (which comes in handy for commuters stuck in rush hour praying to make it to work on time). The cathedral seats 3,000 and has the largest mausoleum in the world. Its 27,000 square feet of windows is the largest use of thinly sliced alabaster worldwide. Besides the building itself, the massive 42-ton, 6,019-pipe organ rises an impressive 85 feet from the nave and is fully encased in solid cherrywood. It blows 20 inches of wind pressure, the envy of most priests. The acoustics are unparalleled—any Mozart aria will send shivers down the spines of even the most stubborn of nonbelievers. For a blessed hangover, stop by the gift shop and pick up a couple of signature bottles of red—you'll be on your knees praying to the porcelain god later. ***Bonus:*** There is free parking if you go to Mass, but like life itself, that's on the honor system, too. The outside of the **Walt Disney Concert Hall** is just the over-the-top statement that Downtown L.A. has needed—a companion piece to MoCA, just a couple blocks away. The idea that architect Frank Gehry and Walt Disney's widow, Lillian, had was to create "L.A.'s living room." Well, maybe if the SWAT team just ran a battering ram through your five-story sheet metal garage. Exploding wings, dissected, disassembled, and deconstructed like bad vivisection (in a good way). Total cost: $274 million, and it was under construction for 15 years.

Annual events... What's the best thing about being at the **Tournament of Roses Parade** on New Year's Day? Answer: Knowing that in three-quarters of the country, people are going around complaining about windchill, slipping on sidewalks covered in frozen urine, and dreading the fact that they have another 3 months of the same to

NEON SIGHTS

At one time L.A. was Neon City, and there are still pockets of garish lighting left over from the good old days. On Sunset, just west of Echo Park Avenue in Echo Park, a ***glowing bowler above Jensen's Recreation Center*** *rolls a red ball toward neon pins. As you're heading south on Alvarado Street to Westlake Boulevard, check out the* ***Wilshire Street corridor signs*** *around MacArthur Park, especially at the Westlake Theater and the Wilshire Royale Hotel. Next, turn north on Vermont Avenue and go up to 3rd Street to the* ***Superet Light Church*** *and its 11-foot-high glowing purple heart. For more modern neon, there's always the* ***Museum of Neon Art (MONA)*** *on West Olympic Boulevard. More than 20 of MONA's older, larger pieces can also be seen for free at* ***Universal CityWalk*** *in Universal City. And at* ***Track 16 Gallery*** *in Bergamot Station, you'll find another sizable collection.*

look forward to (kind of the way Angelenos feel about summer in Aug—but that's another story). Anyway, we celebrate the weather everyone else hates us for with a big fancy parade and lots and lots of flowers and celebrities on floats, all topped off with a football game. And just like football, the whole thing is much better when seen on TV, unless you love big crowds and camping out for days to score the best seats. February brings **Chinese New Year** in Chinatown, culminating in the **Golden Dragon Parade.** It's nowhere near as much fun as the festivities in San Francisco (there are *way* fewer fireworks, for one thing), but at least you can find parking. Also in February there's the **Pan African Film Festival,** based out of the Magic Johnson Theatres on La Brea Avenue or in the Crenshaw Plaza. It's the largest and oldest film festival of its kind in the world and is notable for offering exposure to remarkable films you'll never see at your local 12-screen Cineplex. Highly recommended. In March there's the **Los Angeles Marathon,** in which tens of thousands of people run 26 miles through the L.A. streets *without* a cop shooting at them. The **Spring Festival of Flowers** also debuts that month at Descanso Gardens. Featuring one of the most glorious bulb displays in the Southland, it stays "up" (thanks to floral Viagra) until mid-April, depending on the weather. In April we all head downtown to Olvera Street to get our pets sprinkled with holy water in the **Blessing of the Animals.** Jesus isn't just for people anymore: You'll see dogs, cats, snakes, mice—I even spotted one guy wheeling a Sony console TV through the line. Also in late April or early May is **Fiesta Broadway,** a huge block party throughout Downtown's Central Market: mariachis, drunks, food stalls, drunks, cops on horseback...and drunks. May is **Cinco de Mayo** time on Olvera Street as well as over in East L.A. and the city of Whittier, with lots of parades and food stalls and (again) mariachis, drunks, and cops. The first weekend of May is also **La Gran Limpieza**—cleaning by volunteers of the L.A. River, hosted by Friends of the Los Angeles River (FLOR). The FLOR-sponsored annual bike **River Ride** takes place a few weekends later. In June the **Playboy Jazz Festival** brings top-name groups to the Hollywood Bowl, while over in WeHo, all Dykes on Bikes and Queers Without Fears come out of the closet for the **Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade.** The **Fourth of July** fireworks displays are held up and down the coastline, but my favorite is launched from Dodger Stadium. Also this month is the **Lotus Festival,** timed to coincide with the blooming of Echo Park Lake's lotus plants. This is an Asian/Pacific Islander event that boasts Cambodian dancers, Thai food stalls, Dragon Boat races, and ducks everywhere. Bonus attraction: This is one of the few times of the year when one is allowed to cross the bridge onto Duck Island. (Watch where you step.) **Outfest** (www.outfest.org), the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Film Festival (and all-around transgender cultural smorgasbord), takes place in July, usually in the second week, and lasts for 10 days or so. It is the oldest and largest film festival in L.A. and has presented more than 4,000 film and video screenings before more than half a million God-fearing attendees. For more than a decade, the annual **Blessing of the Cars** has taken place at the Hansen Dam. More than 10,000 motorists drive by for the all-day, all-night event, which begins with a Mass by a Catholic priest and then progresses to an individual blessing on each beloved vehicle, redefining the term "Holy Roller." There are hundreds of classics, customs, street rods, hotrods, trucks, and motorcycles as well as bands playing rockabilly, surf, rock, swing, and punk. It's not your typical mass-blessing ritual, with "more tattoos than the Navy." Want to top off your radiator with holy water? Check the website (www.blessingofthecars.com) for the date—usually in July. August is the time of the Bon Festival in most of Japan, and over here

Japanese-Americans mark the occasion with **Nisei Week** in Little Tokyo. Again, lots of ethnic food from food stalls, plus really cheap bonsai trees, pottery, and kimono cloth. In September the celebration moves out to Pomona for the **Los Angeles County Fair,** where the 4-H Club meets trailer-park culture. If you like watching pigs shit and enjoy crowds, nasty fast food, and getting a headache from the sun, then by all means come on out. (The amateur art shows are a complete hoot.) Since L.A. is the Motion Picture Capital of the World, movie geeks are advised to visit in the late fall for the annual **AFI Film Festival,** the largest international film festival in Los Angeles. While it doesn't get the hype of Sundance or Cannes, it is 7 days of the best independent and foreign films you could ever hope to see. Screenings are held at Hollywood theaters as well as the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills. October brings the **Festival of Masks** to Hancock Park. You'll find ethnic-food stalls as usual, but also theater, free music, contests for the best masks, and a parade down Wilshire Boulevard. It's the perfect lead-in event for Halloween, even though most of these masks are either wonderful folk-craft objects or pure works of whimsical art—nothing you'd want to wear out. **Halloween** itself has two special hot spots: WeHo (or West Hollywood), where cross-dressing is celebrated all year long anyway, and Hollywood Boulevard, long notorious for playing host to the weirdest sewer of sickos ever to wear a Ken Starr mask. Then right on the heels of All Soul's Eve, at the beginning of November, comes **Dia de los Muertos**—the Day of the Dead! You'll see altars erected all around East L.A. to honor the previous year's departed. As a starting point, check out **Self-Help Graphics** on Cesar Chavez Avenue. At the end of the month is the **Doo Dah Parade,** which used to be a street-guerrilla theater parody of the Tournament of Roses extravaganza, but has since morphed into just another cynical, money-making show. Still, where else can you see the Teenage Alcoholic Precision Projectile Vomiting Marching Band? Then there's the **Hollywood Christmas Parade,** held on Thanksgiving weekend and featuring lots of celebrities you never heard of or thought were dead (maybe they are), marching bands, floats, drunks, cops, and an early appearance by Santa Claus. Just another typical night on Hollywood Boulevard if you ask me. **Las Posadas,** the candlelight procession out of the San Gabriel Mission at Olvera Street the week before Christmas, is a soothing and authentic reminder of our Spanish-American roots.

Autoeroticism... We also don't like to get out of our cars. That's why we have drive-in windows for everything from burgers to blessings. We invented the minimall, drive-ins, drive-bys, and freeways. In a typical year, the average commuting Angeleno spends a week in gridlocked traffic, seething, waiting, fingering the safety on the Glock. To get a sense of how Los Angeles has changed over the years, drive the 110 to Pasadena from Downtown. This first freeway was built with smaller cars and slower speeds in mind. Think about this on the entrance ramp at Avenue 42, where you have to start from a dead stop and try to blend into a cloud of cars whizzing by. Or, you could just go to the **Petersen Automotive Museum** (part of the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum), located on Wilshire Boulevard in the Miracle Mile District. Here you'll find more than 150 vehicles on display, ranging from classics to modern hybrids and futuristic nonpolluting sex-mobiles. There are three floors of exhibits, starting with a 1901 Downtown blacksmith shop where one of the first L.A. cars was built—by 46 hands, not robots. Giant rotating gears hang overhead in the main hallway. There is a 1920s service station, a 1939 car showroom, a 1950s body shop, and a 1960s suburban garage. There's even a mock-up

Architecture Tours

Cultural boutique tour programs like ***Architours*** *are gaining in popularity as residents start wising up to their surroundings. The tours of art and architecture mix lecture and on-site visits and are specifically designed for particular groups and led by respected local architects. A somewhat more casual approach comes from* ***L.A. Architecture Tours,*** *which focuses on Hollywood, Downtown, and Pasadena, visiting from 50 to 90 sites, among them many midcentury modern homes. An added bonus is the 1962 Cadillac that is your "bus." You'll gain a solid understanding of L.A. architectural heritage on one of the* ***Los Angeles Conservancy Walking Tours of Downtown.*** *For just $8 and 2½ hours of very minimal exercise, you'll get a new appreciation of the grimy Historic Core. No children, strollers, or walk-ins.*

of a California Highway Patrolman (CHiP) hiding behind an *L.A. Times* billboard. (There's no diorama depicting a south L.A. drive-by, an East L.A. lowrider trying to escape the cops, or a BMW-riding agent in a fit of road rage.) The museum isn't just for weekend grease monkeys, either—kids love it, too. In the Vroom Room, kids can sit on a CHP motorcycle, push the button, and see how a radar gun works—knowledge that will come in handy once they get their licenses. Also, don't miss the 24-foot-long, 11-foot-high dashboard display. Now, *that's* an instrument panel I can deal with.

Who needs MoMA?... The **Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA)** and its sister institution **The Geffen Contemporary** are L.A.'s most focused statements about the health and vibrancy of the contemporary art scene. MoCA is situated up on Bunker Hill in a wonderful Arata Isozaki postmodern structure that will still look good 50 years from now. The museum has a huge post-1940 permanent collection and mounts more than 20 additional exhibitions each year—historical and thematic shows as well as one-person retrospectives, covering everything from painting, sculpture, and drawing to video, photography, film, music, dance, performance, design, and architecture. ***Plagiarists' alert:*** Writing and sketching is allowed in the galleries, but in pencil only (pencils are available at the information centers). The Geffen Contemporary, aka the TC—so-called because it was the Temporary Contemporary prior to the completion of MoCA's main facility—is down in Little Tokyo. Less stuffy than MoCA, the TC became known early on for throwing wild parties that reflected the vibe and energy of the Downtown art movement. That sense of chaos, fun, and anything-goes art is still alive here. The space was once a police garage until Frank Gehry revamped it, turning it into one of the best warehouse sites for art you'll find anywhere. The museum has a free-form open layout, with an industrial high ceiling, wood and steel beams, and gray-painted cement floor. The space also houses a reading room and an artist background display center for explanations of what the art means, for those who just don't get it. Art *breathes* here.

More free art... Once you get in the habit of seeing art for no charge, it's hard to go back to paying conventional entrance fees. Thursday evenings from 5 to 8 are free at the **MoCA** in Downtown and at **The Geffen Contemporary** in Little Tokyo, as well as at the **Japanese American National Museum** next door to the Geffen. During the summer, the Geffen hosts outdoor Thursday-night jazz concerts—also free, with wine and beer available. Since parking in Little Tokyo is easy and starts at just $2, your best bet is definitely to head over here. Normally one museum a day is enough to absorb, but the experiences at the Geffen and the Japanese American National Museum are so different (and they're close to each other) that they make a highly compatible double bill. The Natural History Museum hosts "First Fridays" on the first Friday of the month, opening up their old bones to as many as 1,500 club kids for a night of dancing before name DJs. The L.A. County Museum of Modern Art, aka LACMA, also hosts all-night parties for members and recently even the Science Museum at USC has gone for all-night shows. And no trip to L.A. would be complete without a visit to the 100-foot-plus-high **Watts Towers Arts Center,** one obsessed individual's delightful backyard Eiffel Tower. Built over 34 years starting in 1921 by Simon Rodia, the Watts Towers are constructed from plaster, concrete, iron, steel, bottle caps, glass, seashells, and bits of broken pottery and tile.

Words on paper and in your ear... There is no more glorious testament to the vitality of Downtown than the **Los Angeles Central Library,** a weird Babylonian ziggurat that represents one of the high-water marks of L.A. design, mixing Art Deco with the ancient Middle East. This is the place to come when you need to take the pulse of the city. Its official title is The Richard J. Riordan Central Library, but absolutely nobody uses that name. The chairs are comfortable, the facility clean, and the computers online. The fabulous open-air atrium, part of a major expansion and redesign after a disastrous arson fire in the '80s, is a wonderful symbol of appreciation for the power of the word. This is an essential L.A. landmark, free and open to all. The library also hosts numerous readings, storytelling sessions, and photo exhibits. The Aloud series in particular is one of the best free left-brain experiences you'll find: readings from Pulitzer Prize–winning authors, insightful interviews with of-the-moment thinkers and activists, rare public talks by influential artists. Reservations are highly suggested.

Over in Venice you'll find the **Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center,** the main outlet for L.A. poets who are serious about their craft. In existence for more than 2 decades, the facility has ongoing readings by the hip and famous Thursday through Sunday nights (Exene Cervenka and Viggo Mortensen, among others), along with free community workshops and readings by developing artists the rest of the week. Complementing the readings are the center's constantly changing gallery of visual art and the adjacent bookstore. We get very little credit for our literary pursuits, but publishers know that So Cal is the largest book-buying market in the country. Don't believe it? Check out the crowds at the annual *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books, a 2-day celebration held on the UCLA campus in late April. Free to the public, the Festival of Books has author lectures, writing workshops, panel discussions, and storytelling for kids. A mixture of literary icons and those of lesser worth puff and bluster, whinge and whine, performing, yes indeed, before adoring crowds. You do need tickets for the panel discussions; get them (free) through Ticketmaster, Wherehouse, Tu Musica, Tower, Ritmo Latino, and other outlets, or at the festival if you arrive early.

Art openings... Being early-evening events, art openings require no RSVPs or costly tickets and usually come with free drinks, making them the perfect venue for meeting up with a bunch of other poor, thirsty losers whose main sustenance for the night is going to be the accompanying cheese and crackers. Plus, you might even see some good art. And did I mention that the wine is free? First stop is **Bergamot Station Arts Center,** which houses more than 30 galleries in addition to the newly relocated **Santa Monica Museum of Art.** Check out the Gallery of Contemporary Photography for its consistently excellent choices, the lively Track 16 Gallery, or the Gallery of Functional Art. Look in the *L.A. Weekly* "Openings" section for openings and listings. **Billy Shire Fine Arts** is the new Culver City gallery established by Wacko/Soap Plant/La Luz de Jesus gallery owner Billy Shire. Ever since the halcyon days of punk, Shire has operated as a major proponent of outsider art and collectibles, managing to make a profit while bending innocent minds. His gallery openings are among the most raucous in town, merging the various mobs of punks, artists, animators, anarchists, and trailer-park wackos.

Moving Downtown we come to **Art Share,** held on the second Thursday night of each month in the heart of the Artist District. This is a 30,000-square-foot "community art incubator" that holds openings for 20 or more artists at a time. Your $3 donation at the door supports the ongoing community programs sustained by this nonprofit organization, and also gets you into a 99-seat cabaret-like theater at the center of the warehouse where seasoned jazz, rock, and world musicians jam for the crowds who drop in between viewings. If you're unfamiliar with Downtown geography, just follow the klieg light—it'll take you right to the front door. And if you're nervous about the neighborhood, the security guards will even walk you back to your car. In the same neighborhood, **Bloom's General Store** is a central meeting place for the Downtown artist district, and it's also the best spot to find out what's going on in the neighborhood.

Community art... Cruising down Crenshaw Boulevard past the Baldwin Hills Mall, you turn west onto West 43rd Street and leave the neon lights of generic shopping venues behind you. You're now in a little-known neighborhood enclave of low-key, single-story, '60s architecture sprinkled with cafes, small and friendly shops, and easy parking. Welcome to Leimert Park Village. The quiet, tree-lined streets radiating into this village feel like lower Beverly Hills, but in fact this is a well-established African-American arts community, an area where almost every storefront addresses the needs of the artistic instinct. Up and down the two-block span of Degnan Boulevard are at least half a dozen shops featuring authentic African clothing, fabrics, antiques, historical souvenirs, and gift items influenced by the African-American experience. **The Dance Collective,** located midavenue, offers free classes in West African dance, drumming, and personal enhancement to afterschoolers. And at night the street transforms itself into a first-rate jazz scene, drawing on superb local talent as well as big names. A neighborhood favorite: the rows of dapper men playing chess nightly outside **Fifth Street Dick's**

Coffee, where conversations are thoughtful and unhurried. Day or night, the area is a great place to park and just follow the flow of life. At the top of Leimert Park Village, also on West 43rd Street, you'll find the **Leimert Park Fine Art Gallery,** a beautifully crafted community complex that serves as a showcase for African-American fine art. When an envisioned marble entrance proved too expensive to build, cement was painted and polished to give the desired elegant marbleized effect. The gallery fans out in a U-shape, with one wing devoted primarily to African-American portraits and the other featuring African life tableaux in the form of sculptures and bronze statues. The gallery also rents offices (it even helps start-up community businesses with the paperwork) and offers free children's art classes on Saturday. Gallery openings rock with local jazz groups, which play into the night.

Left of MoCA... It's time for something a little different, the left-of-center art world—*way* left, as in maybe another universe. To start with, there's the wonderful **Museum of Jurassic Technology.** Included in the permanent collection are exhibits like *The Stink Ant of the Cameroon* and *Fruit Stone Carving,* while over in the rotating show, a piece is currently on display called *No One May Ever Have the Same Information Again* (made up of letters to the Mount Wilson Observatory, circa 1915–35). You get the idea. Or maybe you don't. This is a place where parody meets reverence, where the meaning of things, rather than their value, is highlighted. At **La Luz de Jesus Gallery,** an homage to outsider art, you'll find Ed "Big Daddy" Roth's Rat Fink–style illustrations and paintings that are halfway between comics and art, usually with a certain trailer-park trash appeal. La Luz also hosts the best openings in the city. Don't expect white wine and mineral water or snotty Westsiders sniffing over the latest deconstructed minimalist offerings dragged out from some Venice garret. Here the refreshment is a keg of beer, and the "patrons" look more like club kids: tattooed, pierced, and sporting crazy-color hair. There's often live music, too, and if the lowbrow aspect wears thin, you can always just wander around the Soap Plant complex. It's better than a trip to the Louvre. Also in left field, but at the opposite end of the commercial spectrum from the previous two examples, are the galleries at the snooty **Art Center** in Pasadena. This very expensive school is the undisputed leader in producing commercially successful, egoistic drones for the worlds of advertising, illustration, photography, graphic art, and environmental and transportation design. Stop by the students' gallery at the Art Center to get a glimpse of where past design horrors came from and what new ones await you. The school was started by an advertising exec in 1930 (what a surprise!)—but, all griping aside, a visit to the galleries is easily as entertaining as going to MoCA, and it's free. Check out the Alyce de Roulet Williamson Gallery for a look at established artists and movements. The student galleries are even more interesting—and scarier.

Oddball museums... The Museum of Erotic Art. Need I say more? Erotic pictures, DVDs, movies, dioramas, diagrams, paintings, etchings, "interactive" displays. (Hmmmmm.) If you've always wondered about what kind of soap you use in a golden shower or how long a gerbil can survive in a dark, confined, moist hole, then the answer is here. Not for kids under 18, obviously. The **Los Angeles Museum of Television and Radio,** sister museum to the original New York branch, has set up shop right in Beverly Hills. I guess that means *we're* the King of All Media now. Right? This museum is a major research center for the broadcast media, as important to the cultural life of L.A. as MoCA or the Getty. It has a collection of more than 100,000 radio and television programs and commercials, all cross-referenced on computer and available for private viewing and listening. There's also a fully functioning studio in the museum where you can sit in and watch actual tapings and broadcasts (about as exciting as watching grass grow, if you want to know the truth). While the Museum of Radio and Television is geared to serious researchers, the **Hollywood Entertainment Museum,** which opened just a few years ago, is much less intimidating and much more tourist-friendly—more Universal Studios than Library of Congress. It tries to cover every aspect of the business called show, from fashion and makeup to special effects and cel animation. It's even got Joan Crawford's padded shoulders and Marlon Brando's T-shirt. There's also an exhibit that attempts to deconstruct Hollywood into five key words: glamour, romance, comedy, action, and spectacle. (Hey, what about *money?*) Probably the most interesting displays are two complete TV studio sets, one from *Star Trek* and the other from *Cheers.* Gee, they looked so much bigger on the tube.

Beautiful buildings we haven't torn down for mini-malls...yet... Fortunately, the city hasn't torn down everything worth looking at, at least not yet. Let's start off with the **MAK Center for Art and Architecture,** formerly the home of Adolph Schindler. (MAK, by the way, stands for Osterreichinsches Museum Fur Angewandte Kunst, or Austria's Museum of Applied Art—Schindler was Austrian.) If you want to really understand L.A.'s non–Spanish Colonial architectural roots, a visit to the studio and residence of this influential architect is absolutely essential. Schindler lived here from 1922 until his death in 1953, and the building reflects his distinctive appreciation for sound, light, and form. Schindler's assistant was Richard Neutra, an architect who went on to surpass his teacher in terms of local influence: Some call him the most important Los Angeles modernist architect ever. Frank Lloyd Wright worked his magic here in the '20s as well, and you can appreciate his striking vision by driving past some of his houses, sometimes even stopping for a walk-through. One of his most famous designs is the Ennis House (2607 Glendower Ave., Los Feliz), a massively heavy monument in Los Feliz that has been likened to a Mayan temple. It was made with "knit-block" construction and is in the process of being restored by the owner. The **Hollyhock House,** inside the Barnsdall Park complex in Los Feliz, is one of the few Wright homes you can inspect fairly intimately. The house itself has stylized hollyhock-motif ornamentation—hence the name—and has a definite pre-Columbian mood to it. You can also see Wright's idiosyncratic idea of furniture and interior spatial arrangement.

Downtown: not for skyscrapers only... Los Angeles City Hall is where we have to begin this section, since it's the most recognizable symbol of L.A. Clark Kent worked here, and Joe Friday displayed it on his badge at the start of every *Dragnet* episode. The building dates from 1928 and resembles both a temple and a skyscraper. The interior is Byzantine dominated by heavy wood, with a rotunda that murmurs Big-Time Power. Up until the mid-'50s the 28-story building was the only structure in the city allowed to exceed L.A.'s 150-foot height limit. Today it's been almost totally restored. Fans of *Blade Runner* will recognize the interior of the Bradbury Building (304 S. Broadway) immediately: It's where the androids' final battle takes place. The exterior is dull as a brick, but the inside, which has been wonderfully restored, is amazing. It's all lacy ironwork and glass, with open stairways and glazed brick walls, and at the top is a huge skylight. The Bradbury was built in 1893 and is one of L.A.'s oldest and best-maintained buildings. Directly across the street is the Million Dollar Theater, 307 S. Broadway, built in 1918 by the firm of Morgan, Walls, and Clements, and boasting a remarkable Churrigueresque exterior. It looks like a Spanish church from Barcelona, but it's right here on Broadway. Close by is another sample of the same architects' work at the Mayan Theater, 1038 S. Hill St., which is now a club. Built in 1927, its design includes seven Mayan warriors above the entrance and a wonderfully painted cast-concrete facade. You could plop it down near Chichén-Itzá and it wouldn't look all that strange. Well, maybe a little. For a while it looked as though the splendor of Union Station was going to fall into total disrepair as train travel vanished. But the 1939 building has come back from the dead big time: Its cathedral ceilings are all clean and bright, the blend of Art Deco and Spanish decor perfectly maintained. Even the marble inlaid floor shines. It also features a very good California Cuisine restaurant (Traxx; see "Dining") that is hugely popular with Downtown executives. Finally, any visit to Downtown must include a drive past the Coca-Cola Building, 1334 S. Central Ave. It was built in the mid-1930s, when Art Deco was still raging. If the portholes, ship doors, promenade deck, and catwalk remind you of the *Titanic*, that's totally intentional. The design was modeled after 1890s-era ocean liners, back when traveling was a glorious experience and Coca-Cola was still made with cocaine. Those were the days.

Hollywood icons... Just up the street from Hollywood and Vine is the Capitol Records Building, 1750 N. Vine Ave., one of the major landmarks of Hollywood. It was built in 1954 and, despite the denials of its architect, is clearly intended to resemble a stack of 45-rpm vinyl records ("They're like CD singles, son—only black."). Back when the Beatles and Frank Sinatra were on the label, Capitol was the gold card of record companies, and its headquarters was the first building of its size (12 stories) to be fully air-conditioned. Now like every other record label in town, they spend their spare cash not on architecture but tracking down pirating college students. How the mighty have fallen. And speaking of falling, the Hollywood Sign is no longer open for suicide jumps. Perched on the shoulders of Mount Lee in Griffith Park overlooking Hollywood, this "most famous sign in the world" (sez the chamber of commerce) was originally spelled HOLLYWOODLAND and was erected, appropriately enough, to advertise a housing development in the sticks. It used to be you could easily slip through the chain-link fence that surrounds the sign near the access road on Mount Lee, but the fence has recently been reinforced. It's still possible to make your way through the brush, but I wouldn't recommend it during the summer rattlesnake season.

Valentino and other frights... To check out what awaits us all, regardless of how many billboards we've graced, a tour of celebrity graves is always quite instructive. At **Hollywood Forever Memorial Park Cemetery,** off a particularly seedy stretch of Santa Monica Boulevard, you'll find the last resting places of Rudolph Valentino, Cecil B. DeMille, Tyrone Power, and Peter Lorre, among others, plus a fake tombstone for Jayne Mansfield (put up by her fan club). Finding them can be a bit tricky, but you're in a graveyard, so what's the rush? Over in the **Westwood Village Memorial Park** lie the remains of Marilyn Monroe, Natalie Wood, Truman Capote, Burt Lancaster, Donna Reed, and *Playboy* centerfold Dorothy Stratten. Frank Zappa and Roy Orbison are also buried here, but in unmarked graves. Finally, in the **Holy Cross Cemetery and Mausoleum** in Culver City, you'll stumble across Bing Crosby, Rita Hayworth, Charles Boyer, Jackie Coogan, Rosalind Russell, Al Jolson, Jack Benny, and Manson-family victim Sharon Tate. Got nothing to do on a summer night? An organization called Cinespia hosts bi-weekly screenings among the tombs.

Living in concrete... **Grauman's Chinese Theatre** is where you can put your feet into the cement shoe prints of various stars from yesterday and today. Also handprints. And legs, if you can find Betty Grable. The theater (it used to be known as Mann's Chinese) is invariably full of yokels from all over, oohing and aahing as they stare down at the ground in the "Forecourt of the Stars." In front of the Guitar Center store on Sunset Boulevard, you'll find the **Hollywood RockWalk,** a "tourist attraction" every bit as crass as Grauman's Chinese but without the history. I mean, Eddie Van Halen? KISS? Dick Clark? Les Paul and John Lee Hooker I can understand, but the Doobie Brothers? *Puh-leeeze.*

Elite art in public places... Who knew? Forty years ago L.A. was one of the first cities in the country to require that new developments use 1% of the building costs for public art. One of the initial installations was Terry Allen's *Corporate Head,* a statue of a businessman on the sidewalk with his head buried inside a wall (inside Citicorp Plaza, 7th and Figueroa sts., Downtown). Other notables Downtown include a Robert Graham bronze sculpture, *Source Figure,* at the top of the waterfall stairway on the Bunker Hill Steps (633 W. 5th St.), Jonathan Borofsky's 22-foot *Hammering Man* (California Market Center, 110 E. 9th St., Downtown), Frank Stella's mammoth 35,000-square-foot mural, *Dusk* (Gas Co. Tower, 555 W. 5th St., Downtown), and Frank Romero's *Homage to Downtown Movie Palaces* mural on the side of a parking structure (Main St. between 5th and 6th sts., Downtown). For some older class acts, venture west to the Beverly Hills City Hall (450 N. Crescent Dr., Beverly Hills) to see Henry Moore's *Girl Seated Against a Square Wall* and Auguste Rodin's *Monumental Torso of the Walking Man.* My favorite, however, is former *L.A. Times* political cartoonist Paul Conrad's *Chain Reaction,* a 26-foot-high sculpture of thick chain links, formed to evoke the shape of a nuclear mushroom cloud (Santa Monica Civic Center, 1855 Main St., Santa Monica).

Parks of note... L.A. is filthy with parks. That's one of the advantages of being spread out over such a great expanse of land. The king of them all is **Griffith Park** in Los Feliz. It's the largest city park in the United States; here you'll find the Hollywood Sign, the **Griffith Observatory,** the Greek Theater, the Los Angeles Zoo, and the Autry Museum of Western Heritage. The only traffic is the occasional film crew, and the views of the Valley are astounding—plus, in the evening you'll certainly see deer, and maybe even a coyote. The trails coming up from Coldwater Canyon (below the Hollywood Sign) are also used by dog people, hikers, and horseback riders. (No mountain bikes allowed.) For the ultimate park view, hike up from the observatory parking lot to the peak of Mount Hollywood (it takes about an hour at a very easy pace). Over to the east, **Elysian Park** wraps around Dodger Stadium and the L.A. Police Academy. During the '60s this was where the hippie be-ins took place. It's both wilder and more parklike than Griffith, with steep shoulders to the east and loads of picnic areas, similar to the picnic areas on Griffith Park's east side. Way less crowded than Griffith, though with fewer attractions, Elysian is especially popular with Latino families. Out in Pacific Palisades there's **Will Rogers State Park,** where you'll find a polo field—the only outdoor one in the city—as well as the ranch-house home of the late comedian. The park sits on 186 acres and is located at the very southern tip of the Santa Monica Mountains, making it the closest available place to the city if you want to park and start walking along the Backbone Trail. A steady but not rigorous walk brings you up to Inspiration Point, from where you can see the entire Santa Monica Bay, all of Century City, and on into Downtown. For polo lovers, matches are held here regularly and spectators are always welcome. Admission is free—you pay only for parking. Finally, next to the USC campus is **Exposition Park,** which is totally unique. Although it's huge and boasts the famous sunken Rose Garden with its 16,000 bushes, this is really more of an inner-city entertainment complex, similar to Balboa Park in San Diego. Here you'll find the **Natural History Museum,** the **Aerospace Museum,** the **IMAX Theater,** the **California Science Center,** the **Museum of Science and Industry,** the **African-American Museum,** the **L.A. Coliseum** (home of the '32 and '84 Olympics), the **Olympic Swimming Stadium,** and the **Sports Arena.**

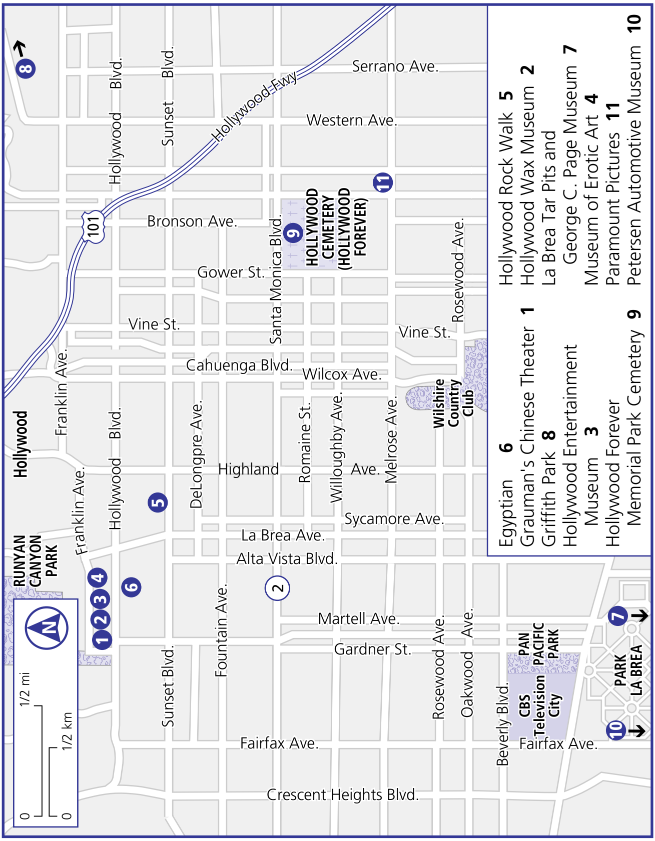
Behind the scenes... To really get an appreciation for the utter, stifling boredom of people working in the TV and

GARDEN SPOTS

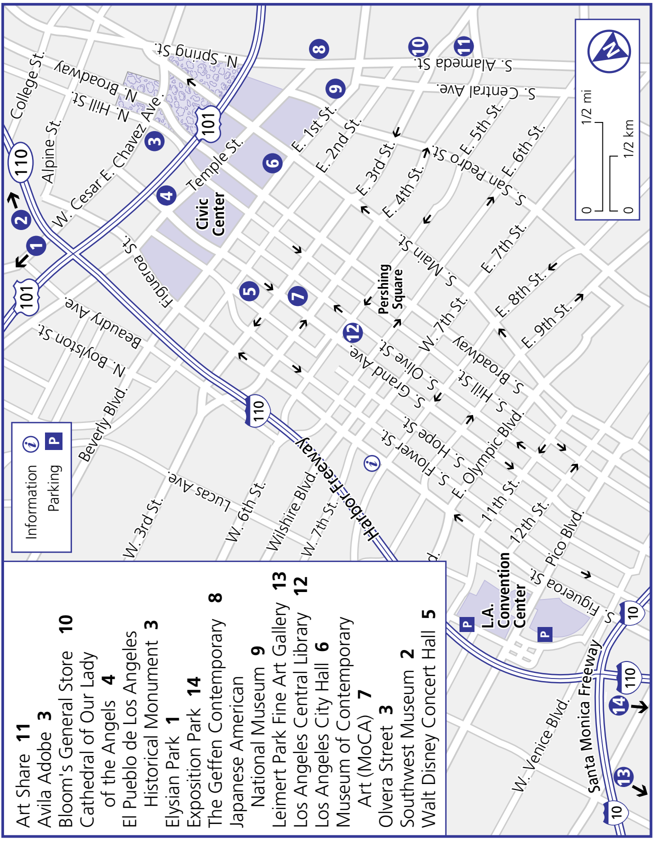
Interested in that green-gray-brown stuff that covers Southern California's hills and burns so nicely every September? The ***Theodore Payne Foundation*** *is a must-visit nursery and bookstore out in the Valley, with a 24-hour Wildlife Hotline during the springtime bloom, which can be used to locate where the poppies are in full, brief glory. The* ***Huntington Gardens*** *started off as a rich man's toy, installed in 1903 by millionaire Henry Huntington. The gardens now cover nearly 150 acres and contain more than 15,000 species of plants, most of them landscaped into theme gardens that are living testaments to the botanical sciences. The* ***Descanso Gardens*** *are much the same thing, only wilder, bigger, and less stuffy. Here you'll encounter wandering peacocks, huge lawns, wonderfully manicured flower beds, pools and waterfalls, a toy train, plus a 4-acre rose garden and thousands of camellias.*

film industries, you have to take a trip to the studios. **Paramount Pictures,** the longest continuously working studio in Hollywood, is probably the most visually pleasing of the lots. For $15 you get a 2-hour walking tour that's guaranteed to persuade you of the wisdom of becoming an agent, not an actor. You should remember that this is a working business: Unlike the Universal Studios tour, there's no canned activity here. No cameras or recorders allowed, and no kids under 10. If you want the full sheeplike experience, sign up at Paramount for a TV taping. Tickets are available 5 working days in advance of each scheduled show and are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. **Warner Brothers Studios** also has a 2-hour tour, which some people say is the best of all the working-studio tours. (The tour may or may not include filming.) TV studio tours at **NBC Television** are 1 hour long and are the only ones offered by a genuine network. They'll even let you see things like *The Tonight Show* set and special-effects labs. You can try to get *Tonight Show* tickets while you're there—the show tapes in the afternoon—but they go fast. For a truly low-rent experience, check out **KCET,** our local PBS station. They give free (of course) 1-hour tours, but only on Tuesday and Thursday.

Map 11: Hollywood Diversions


Egyptian 6
Grauman's Chinese Theater 1
Griffith Park 8
Hollywood Entertainment Museum 3
Hollywood Forever Memorial Park Cemetery 9
Hollywood Rock Walk 5
Hollywood Wax Museum 2
La Brea Tar Pits and George C. Page Museum 7
Museum of Erotic Art 4
Paramount Pictures 11
Petersen Automotive Museum 10
RUNYAN CANYON PARK
Hollywood
HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY (HOLLYWOOD FOREVER)
Wilshire Country Club
CBS Television City
PAN PACIFIC PARK
PARK LA BREA
Hollywood Fwy
101
Franklin Ave.
Hollywood Blvd.
Sunset Blvd.
DeLongpre Ave.
Fountain Ave.
Santa Monica Blvd.
Romaine St.
Willoughby Ave.
Melrose Ave.
Rosewood Ave.
Oakwood Ave.
Beverly Blvd.
Serrano Ave.
Western Ave.
Bronson Ave.
Gower St.
Vine St.
Cahuenga Blvd.
Wilcox Ave.
Highland Ave.
Sycamore Ave.
La Brea Ave.
Alta Vista Blvd.
Martell Ave.
Gardner St.
Fairfax Ave.
Crescent Heights Blvd.
N
0 1/2 mi
0 1/2 km

Map 12: Downtown Diversions


Art Share 11
Avila Adobe 3
Bloom's General Store 10
Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels 4
El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument 3
Elysian Park 1
Exposition Park 14
The Geffen Contemporary 8
Japanese American National Museum 9
Leimert Park Fine Art Gallery 13
Los Angeles Central Library 12
Los Angeles City Hall 6
Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) 7
Olvera Street 3
Southwest Museum 2
Walt Disney Concert Hall 5
Information
P Parking
1/2 mi
1/2 km
0
0
N
Civic Center
Pershing Square
L.A. Convention Center
College St.
Alpine St.
W. Cesar E. Chavez Ave.
N. Broadway
N. Hill St.
N. Spring St.
Temple St.
Figueroa St.
Beaudry Ave.
N. Boylston St.
Beverly Blvd.
W. 3rd St.
Lucas Ave.
W. 6th St.
Wilshire Blvd.
W. 7th St.
Harbor Freeway
E. 1st St.
E. 2nd St.
E. 3rd St.
E. 4th St.
E. 5th St.
E. 6th St.
E. 7th St.
E. 8th St.
E. 9th St.
S. Alameda St.
S. Central Ave.
S. San Pedro St.
S. Main St.
W. 7th St.
S. Broadway
S. Hill St.
S. Olive St.
S. Grand Ave.
S. Hope St.
S. Flower St.
E. Olympic Blvd.
11th St.
12th St.
Pico Blvd.
S. Figueroa St.
W. Venice Blvd.
Santa Monica Freeway
101
110
10

The Index

Architours (p. 103) Walking tours from the architect's perspective: restaurants, public art displays, Craftsman houses, and gardens.... *Tel 323/294-5821. No address; call for information.*

Art Center (p. 109) PASADENA This is an art school—a professional, commercially oriented art school. The student galleries here are amazing.... *Tel 818/396-2200. 1700 Lida St.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Art Share (p. 107) DOWNTOWN Exciting and strange, this is one of the few galleries that gives its (mostly local) artists nearly free reign.... *Tel 213/687-4ART. www.artsharela.org. 801 E. 4th Place, Artist District. $3 donation expected.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Bergamot Station Arts Center (p. 106) SANTA MONICA This huge arts complex in a former industrial space has way more galleries than you could ever slog through in a single evening.... *Tel 310/829-5854. www.bergamotstation.com. 2525 Michigan Ave. Tues–Sat 11am–6pm. $3 suggested donation.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center (p. 106) VENICE Always underfunded but still fighting, this bookstore/performance center is an essential local literary outlet.... *Tel 310/822-3006. www.beyondbaroque.org. 681 Venice Blvd. Bookstore hours Fri noon–6pm and during events. Most readings are free.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Billy Shire Fine Arts (p. 106) CULVER CITY Billy Shire's Westside presence, featuring Outsider art, disturbing cartoonish fine art, and sculptures. Check this place out.... *Tel 323/297-0600. www.billyshirefinearts.com. 5790 Washington Blvd. Tues–Sat noon–6pm. Free admission.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Bloom's General Store (p. 107) DOWNTOWN The primary hangout for artists in the loft district. Ask about directions, gallery openings, happenings, fistfights in progress.... *Tel 213/687-6571.*

716 Traction Ave., Artist District. Mon–Fri 7am–11pm; Sat 8am–11:30pm; Sun 8am–10:30pm.

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels **(p. 99)** DOWNTOWN The freeway is close, but as of yet, there is no drive-through confession.... *Tel 213/620-5200. 555 W. Temple St.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

The Dance Collective **(p. 107)** LEIMERT PARK Offers classes in dance, drumming, and personal enhancement.... *Tel 323/292-1538. 4327 Degnan Blvd.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Descanso Gardens **(p. 115)** LA CANADA A huge garden that verges on wilderness. Check out the Tea House.... *Tel 818/952-4400. www.descanso.com. 1418 Descanso Dr. Daily 9am–5pm. Admission $7 adults, $5 students and seniors, $2 children 5–12, free for children under 5.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Egyptian Theatre **(p. 95)** HOLLYWOOD A classic faux-Egyptian facade and fully renovated, this is a must-see for serious cinephiles. No *T3* or *Reloaded* here—serious, campy, foreign, out-of-print; it's all good.... *Tel 323/466-3456. 6712 Hollywood Blvd.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument **(p. 97)** DOWNTOWN The Plaza was the symbolic heart of colonial California, in the days when the Spanish ran the place. See the Old Plaza Church, the Avila Adobe house, and the Pico House, all built in the 17th century.... *Tel 213/628-1274. 130 Paseo de la Plaza.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Elysian Park **(p. 114)** DOWNTOWN This 575-acre park, next to Downtown overlooking the Los Angeles River, encompasses Dodger Stadium, the L.A. Police Academy, and the Chavez Ravine Arboretum, home to more than 1,000 varieties of trees.... *Entrances from Sunset Blvd., I-5, Stadium Way, Elysian Park Dr., and Academy Dr.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Exposition Park **(p. 114)** DOWNTOWN Besides the L.A. Coliseum, the 1984 Olympic swimming and cycling venues, and its extensive Rose Garden, the park contains four museums.... *Natural History Museum; Tel 213/763-3515. African-American Museum; Tel 213/744-7432. California Science Center, which includes the Aerospace Museum and the IMAX Theater; Tel 323/724-3623; www.californiasciencecenter.org. Figueroa St. at Exposition Blvd.,* *Exposition Park. Open 10am–5pm except Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's. Air and Space Gallery open Mon–Fri 10am–1pm; Sat–Sun 11am–4pm. Free admission.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Fifth Street Dick's Coffee (p. 107) LEIMERT PARK This cozy little hangout in Leimert Park is where you come to get whomped at chess by some crusty old men.... *Tel 323/296-3970. 3347 W. 43rd Place.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

The Geffen Contemporary (p. 104) DOWNTOWN Ground zero for the local art scene. It has the best installations and openings of any museum in the city.... *Tel 213/621-2766. www.moca.org. 152 N. Central Ave. Mon and Fri 11am–5pm; Thurs 11am–8pm; Sat–Sun 11am–6pm. Adults $8, students and seniors $5, children under 12 free. Free admission on Thurs.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Getty Center (p. 97) BRENTWOOD Incredible vistas, a computerized tram, and, oh yeah, a bunch of pictures by dead guys. The art is off-and-on fabulous, sometimes overwhelmed by the sheer beauty of the setting.... *Tel 310/454-1173 or 310/440-7300. www.getty.edu/museum. 1200 Getty Center Dr. Sun and Tues–Thurs 10am–6pm; Fri–Sat 10am–9pm. Free admission, although parking is $7.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Grauman's Chinese Theatre (p. 95) HOLLYWOOD They've chopped it up to make it a multiplex inside and gave it a face-lift outside, but Grauman's is still a Hollywood legend: celebrity handprints in cement, stadium seating, and pampering ushers.... *Tel 323/464-6266. 6925 Hollywood Blvd.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

Griffith Observatory Satellite (p. 114) GRIFFITH PARK For those whose heads are always in the clouds, check out this satellite office taking over for the temporarily closed Griffith Observatory until 2006.... *Tel 323/664-1181. www.Griffithobs.org/satellite.html. 4800 Western Heritage Way. Tues–Fri 1–10pm; Sat–Sun 10am–10pm. Free admission.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Griffith Park (p. 113) LOS ANGELES The kingpin of L.A. parks, Griffith Park contains the aforementioned observatory, the Los Angeles Zoo, the Greek Theater, and Mount Hollywood.... *Tel 323/664-1181. Roads into the park close at sunset.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

Hollyhock House (p. 110) LOS FELIZ A Frank Lloyd Wright house you should park near and visit on foot. Located inside the Barnsdall Art complex.... *Tel 323/662-7272. 4800 Hollywood Blvd. Free tours Wed–Sun hourly 12:30–3:30pm.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Hollywood Entertainment Museum (p. 109) HOLLYWOOD This showcase for Hollywood's entertainment industry has more hype and industry promotion than you'd expect from a "museum," but it's still worth a visit.... *Tel 213/465-7900. www.hollywoodmuseum.com. 7021 Hollywood Blvd. Early Sept through late May Thurs–Tues 11am–6pm; Memorial Day through Labor Day daily 10am–6pm. Adults $12, seniors $10, students $5, children under 5 free.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

Hollywood Forever Memorial Park Cemetery (p. 112) HOLLYWOOD For interred celebrities and the trolling Goths and punks who break in.... *Tel 323/469-1181. www.hollywoodforever.com. 6000 Santa Monica Blvd.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

Hollywood RockWalk (p. 113) HOLLYWOOD Handprints, signatures, and memorabilia from some of rock 'n' roll's greatest players.... *Tel 213/874-1060. 7425 Sunset Blvd.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

Hollywood Wax Museum (p. 95) HOLLYWOOD Julia Roberts, Michael Jackson, and more, occasionally less plastic than their counterparts... *Tel 323/462-8860. www.hollywoodwax.com. 6767 Hollywood Blvd. Daily 10am–midnight. Admission $9.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

Holy Cross Cemetery and Mausoleum (p. 112) CULVER CITY Walter Brennan, Mario Lanza, Michael Landon, Lorne Green, Jack Benny—they're all here. No autographs, please.... *Tel 323/836-5500. 5835 W. Slauson Ave. Fall/winter hours daily 8am–5pm; spring/summer hours daily 8am–6pm.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Huntington Gardens (p. 115) SAN MARINO Its full name is the Huntington Library, Art Collection & Botanical Gardens, but you're really here for 15,000 different species of plants, landscaped into highly specific botanical zones, from Japan to the desert.... *Tel 626/405-2141. www.huntington.org. 1151 Oxford Rd. Tues–Fri noon–4:30pm; Sat–Sun 10:30am–4:30pm. Adults $15, seniors $12, students 12–18 $10, children 5–11 $6, children under 5 free.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Japanese American National Museum **(p. 97)** LITTLE TOKYO This place resembles a glass ocean liner, with artifacts of immigrants' early American experiences that will make you weep.... *Tel 213/626-6222. www.janm.org. 369 E. 1st St. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; Thurs 10am–8pm. Adults $8, seniors $5, students and children 6–17 $4, children under 6 free. Free Thurs 5–8pm and every 3rd Thurs of the month.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

KCET **(p. 115)** HOLLYWOOD Free 1-hour tours of this headquarters for L.A.'s Public Broadcasting System station are offered on Tuesday and Thursday.... *Tel 323/666-6500. www.kcet.org. 4401 W. Sunset Blvd.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

L.A. Architecture Tours **(p. 103)** DOWNTOWN A very casual drive-by tour of Downtown architectural landmarks.... *Tel 323/464-7868. www.architecturetoursla.com.*

La Brea Tar Pits and George C. Page Museum **(p. 96)** MIRACLE MILE It's not exactly Jurassic Park, but for the fledgling paleontologist in your family, this is the next best thing. The most impressive exhibit is the life-size mammoth skeleton. Great gift store as well.... *Tel 323/934-7243. www.tarpits.org. 5801 Wilshire Blvd. Mon–Fri 9:30am–5pm; Sat–Sun and holidays 10am–5pm. Adults $7, seniors and students $4.50, children 5–12 $2, children under 5 free. Free admission 1st Tues of month.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

La Luz de Jesus Gallery **(p. 108)** LOS FELIZ Unquestionably the most interesting and partylike openings in L.A. Mingle with scene-makers, hipsters, grunge artists, musicians, and the dregs of Hollywood/Silver Lake/Echo Park.... *Tel 323/666-7667. www.laluzdejesus.com. 4633 Hollywood Blvd., inside the Soap Plant. Gallery openings on 1st Fri of the month 8–11pm.*

Leimert Park Fine Art Gallery **(p. 108)** LEIMERT PARK The most active and interesting African-American gallery in L.A.... *Tel 323/299-0319. 3351 W. 43rd St.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Los Angeles Central Library **(p. 105)** DOWNTOWN Third largest library in the country. If El Pueblo is the historical heart of L.A., then this is its intellectual center, with awesome architecture. "Aloud" series free events are a big draw.... *Tel 213/228-7000. www.lapl.org. 630 W. 5th St. Mon–Thurs 10am–8pm; Fri–Sat 10am–6pm; Sun 1–5pm.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Los Angeles City Hall (p. 110) DOWNTOWN Here the mayor and his minions do battle with a usually confrontational council. Fabulous interiors, incredibly dull hearings, fascist guards.... *Tel 213/485-2121. 200 N. Spring St.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Los Angeles Conservancy Walking Tours of Downtown (p. 103) DOWNTOWN The only coalition in Los Angeles looking after the aged (buildings, that is). A major resource for Downtown historical landmarks. By reservation only.... *Tel 213/623-2489. www.laconservancy.org/tours. 523 W. 6th St., Suite 1216. Tours generally begin at 10am and last 2½ hr., although the Biltmore and City Hall tours begin at 11am and are 1¾ hr. long, and the Highland Park and San Pedro tours begin at 1pm. Tours are $10. No strollers or young children.*

Los Angeles County Fair (p. 102) POMONA An annual extravaganza held every September, it includes horse races, a carnival, farm husbandry competitions, folk arts and crafts, and lots and lots of heartburn-inducing food. Pig out, ride the Ferris wheel, and spew.... *Tel 909/623-3111. 1101 W. McKinley Ave. (Approximately 30 miles east of Downtown Los Angeles and 10 miles west of Ontario International Airport, where the 10, 210, and 57 freeways meet.)*

Los Angeles Museum of Television and Radio (p. 109) BEVERLY HILLS This L.A. version of the New York museum is stunning in its variety of television and radio programs.... *Tel 310/786-000. www.mtr.org. 465 N. Beverly Dr. Wed–Sun noon–5pm. Free admission but suggested donations are $10 adults, $8 students and seniors, $5 children under 14.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Los Angeles Zoo (p. 95) GRIFFITH PARK This is the closest most people outside of the entertainment business will ever get to a snake. Angry chimps in the Great Ape Forest, gay pandas, and free music in the summer.... *Tel 323/666-4650. www.lazoo.org. 5333 Zoo Dr. Daily 10am–5pm. Adults and children 13 and older $10, seniors $7, children 2–12 $5, children under 2 free. Free parking.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

MAK Center for Art and Architecture/Schindler House (p. 110) WEST HOLLYWOOD A rare glimpse at the work of famous architect Adolph Schindler, inside his original home.... *Tel 213/651-1510. www.makcenter.org. 835 N. Kings Rd. Wed–Sun 11am–6pm. Adults $7, students $5, children under 12 free. Free admission Sept 12, Schindler's birthday.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) **(p. 104)** DOWNTOWN Twenty years ago, no one ever imagined that L.A. would have a contemporary art museum this complete and this important. Among the permanent collection are works by Ed Rushea and Lari Pittmann.... *Tel 213/626-6222. www.moca.org. 250 S. Grand Ave. Mon and Fri 11am–5pm; Thurs 11am–8pm; Sat–Sun 11am–6pm. Adults $8, students and seniors $5, children under 12 free. Free admission Thurs.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Museum of Erotic Art **(p. 109)** HOLLYWOOD Yowza! Doesn't that hurt?! This is the place for all things sexual, whips and chains included.... *Tel 323/463-7684. www.theeroticmuseum.com. 6741 Hollywood Blvd. Sun–Thurs noon–9pm; Fri–Sat noon–midnight. Adults $13, students and seniors $10. Under 18 not allowed.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

Museum of Jurassic Technology **(p. 108)** CULVER CITY This is the strangest museum in the city. Not recommended for people lacking a sense of humor or perspective.... *Tel 310/836-6131. www.mjt.org. 9341 Venice Blvd. Thurs 2–8pm; Fri–Sun noon–6pm. Adults $5, students, seniors, unemployed, children 12–21 $3, disabled, military in uniform $2, children under 12 free. Admission free 15 min. before closing time.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Museum of Neon Art (MONA) **(p. 100)** DOWNTOWN An educational place to view this most L.A. of art styles. The museum also offers classes and conducts nighttime tours.... *Tel 213/489-9918. www.neonmona.org. 501 W. Olympic Blvd. Wed–Sat 11am–5pm; Sun noon–5pm. Adults $5, students 13–22 $3.50, children 12 and under free.*

Museum of the American West **(p. 96)** GRIFFITH PARK The Wild West is presented here in all its seedy glory.... *Tel 323/667-2000. www.autry-museum.org. 4700 Western Heritage Way (opposite the L.A. Zoo). Tues–Wed and Fri–Sun 10am–5pm; Thurs 10am–8pm. Admission $7.50 adults, $5 students and seniors, $3 children. Free Thurs after 4pm.*

NBC Television **(p. 115)** BURBANK NBC tours or tickets to TV tapings. TV studios are kept freezing cold, so bring a sweater.... *Tel 818/840-3537; 818/840-3537 for ticket information. 3000 W. Alameda Ave. Tours are $7.50. Tickets to see taping of* The Tonight Show *are free.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Olvera Street **(p. 95)** DOWNTOWN This is where Los Angeles began. Built around the Avila Adobe, erected in 1818 by former mayor Francisco Avila, this block-long shopping-walking street is like a visit to a Tijuana that doesn't exist anymore.... *Tel 213/680-2525. Alameda Ave. and E. Cesar Chavez Ave.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Paramount Pictures **(p. 115)** HOLLYWOOD Tours and TV taping tickets (handed out on a first-come, first-served basis). A limited number of advance "priority admission" reservations can be obtained by calling Paramount Guest Relations.... *Tel 323/956-17777. www.paramount.com. 5555 Melrose Ave.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

Petersen Automotive Museum **(p. 103)** MIRACLE MILE It's all about internal combustion—something that every Angeleno deals with on a daily basis. Loads of cars—rare, modern, historical, and just plain weird.... *Tel 323/930-CARS. www.petersen.org. 6060 Wilshire Blvd. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Adults $10, seniors, students, active military $5, children 5–12 $3, children under 5 free.*

See Map 11 on p. 116.

Santa Monica Museum of Art **(p. 106)** SANTA MONICA Knowns and unknowns on display, with plenty of choices if the show sucks. ***Best bet:*** Kids Art Station workshops and classes on weekend afternoons.... *Tel 310/586-6488. www.smmoa.org. Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Building G. Tues–Sat 11am–6pm.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Self-Help Graphics **(p. 102)** EAST LOS ANGELES This is the place to come to find out about any sort of art project in East L.A. It also has art classes, a gallery, and a great Dia de los Muertos altar every year.... *Tel 323/881-6444. www.selfhelpgraphics.com. 3802 Cesar E. Chavez Ave. Tues–Fri 10am–4pm.*

Southwest Museum **(p. 96)** HIGHLAND PARK Absolutely the best collection of Native American artifacts and historical reference material in L.A., in a stunning hacienda on top of a hill in Mount Washington.... *Tel 323/221-2164. www.southwestmuseum.org. 234 Museum Dr. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. Adults $7.50, students and seniors $4, children 2–12 $3.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center) (p. 98) VENICE Info on L.A. murals and public art, plus bus tours of the murals, sometimes led by the artists.... *Tel 310/822-9560. www.sparcmurals.org. 685 Venice Blvd.*

Theodore Payne Foundation (p. 115) SUN VALLEY This all-native-plant nursery and resource center is a great place to come for a better understanding of Southern California flora.... *Tel 818/768-1802; 818/768-3533 for Wildflower Hotline. www.theodorepayne.org. 10459 Tuxford St. Tues–Sat 8:30am–4:30pm; summer hours July–Sept Thurs–Sat 8:30am–4:30pm.*

Track 16 Gallery (p. 100) SANTA MONICA It's not easy standing out in the gallery petting zoo that is Bergamot Station, but Track 16 manages to draw attention. It can be hit-or-miss, like all galleries, but it has a great bar area in the back.... *Tel 310/264-4678. www.track16.com. Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Universal CityWalk (p. 100) UNIVERSAL CITY Restaurants, movies, shops, clubs, and a cool neon display.... *Tel 818/622-4455. www.citywalkhollywood.com. Universal Center Dr. Sun–Thurs 11am–9pm; Fri–Sat 11am–11pm. Free admission.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Walt Disney Concert Hall (p. 99) DOWNTOWN Frank Gehry's otherworldly masterpiece. A must see.... *Tel 213/972-7211. www.musiccenter.org/wdch. 151 S. Grand Ave. Box office hours Tues–Sun noon–6pm.*

See Map 12 on p. 117.

Warner Brothers Studios (p. 115) BURBANK A working movie studio that also gives the best tours of the filming process in action.... *Tel 818/954-1744. www.studio-tour.com. 4000 Warner Blvd. Oct–Apr 2-hr. tours leave every half-hour 9am–3pm; May–Sept 9am–4pm. Admission $39. Children under 8 not permitted.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Watts Towers Arts Center (p. 105) WATTS An essential L.A. icon, recently restored.... *Tel 213/847-4646. www.trywatts.com. 1765 E. 107th St. Tues–Sat 10–4pm; Sun noon–4pm. No pets. Free admission.*

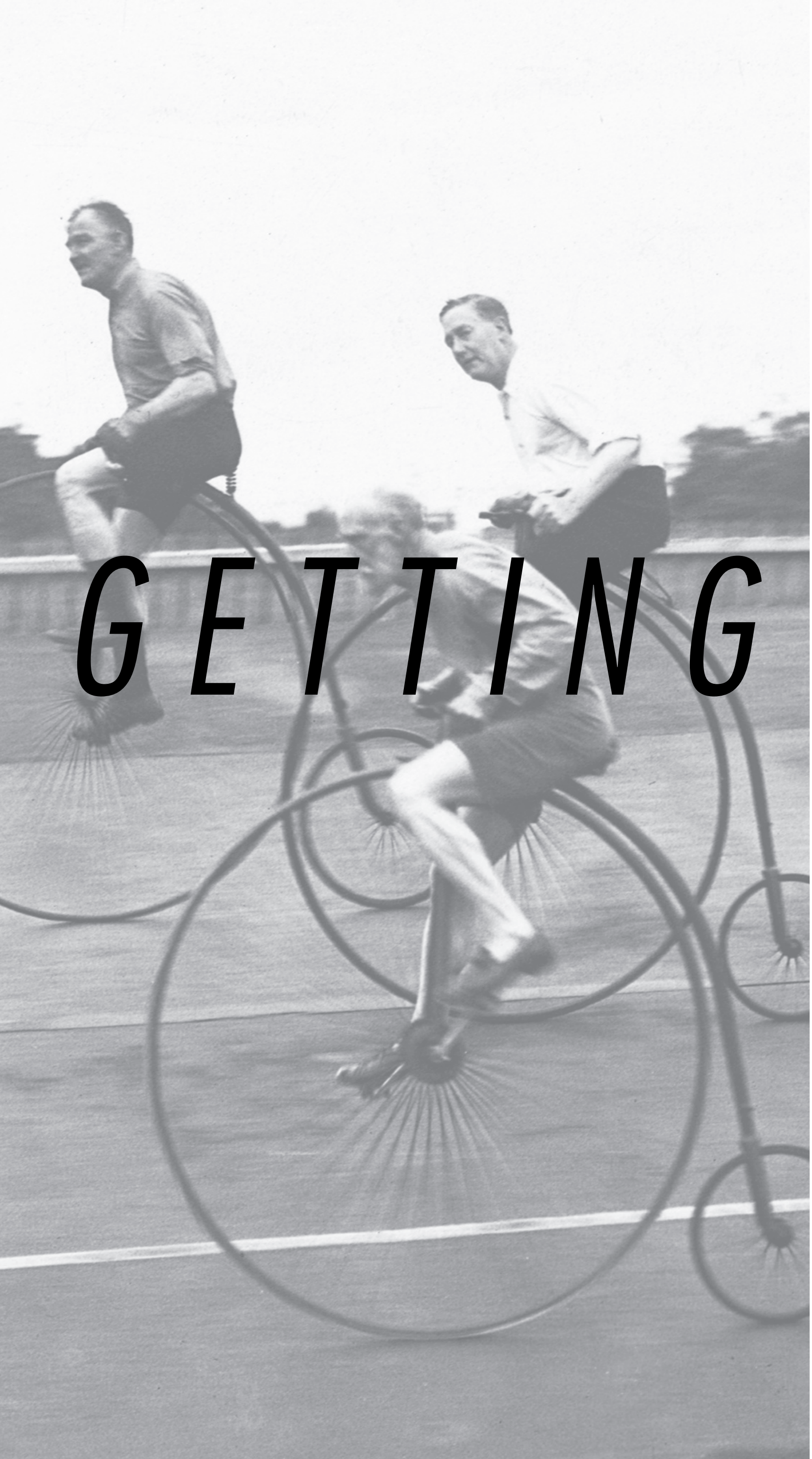
See Map 10 on p. 92.

Westwood Village Memorial Park (p. 112) WESTWOOD Marilyn Monroe is buried here. What more do you need to know?.... *Tel 310/399-5353. 1218 Glendon Ave.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.

Will Rogers State Park **(p. 114)** PACIFIC PALISADES Part historical tour, part polo park, and part jumping-off point for walks into the Santa Monica Mountains.... *Tel 310/454-8212. www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=626. 1501 Will Rogers State Park Rd. Ranch tours Tues–Sat 11am, 1pm, 2pm.*

See Map 10 on p. 92.



GETTING

OUTSIDE

4

Basic Stuff

That's not smog obscuring the mountains, it's *haze.* This is one of the first things you learn here. Only tourists call it smog—the rest of us understand that the delicate chemical dance of carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and ozone is what makes this city so special. Just as leaves turning red-yellow signals the arrival of fall to Easterners, for us Angelenos the sky turning brown heralds the beginning of summer. And fall.

Thing is, a pollution emergency is about the only thing that can keep Los Angeles residents indoors on the weekends. Just about all year long, when Saturday comes we grab the blades, load the Cannondale onto the bike rack, lace up the Air Jordans, slather Sex Wax on the short board, and hit the boardwalk/mountain trails/courts/waves. In L.A., anytime is playtime—so come on, what are you waiting for?

The Lowdown

Inner-city beaches... When the temperature reaches the high 90s Downtown and you know there's bumper-to-bumper traffic heading up the Pacific Coast Highway, don't despair: There are alternative water sources right here in the concrete heart of the city. You can't actually go swimming, of course, but a refreshingly cooling effect is produced simply by strolling along big expanses of water. The newest such beach is the **L.A. River.** More than 250 species of birds live on the waterway from Tujunga Wash to Long Beach, along with more than 150 types of vegetation. It used to be a healthy, flowing river for its entire length, but the flood of 1938 killed nearly 50 people and did $40 million in damage—so in anger the city fathers called upon the Army Corps of Engineers. Ten thousand workers poured three million barrels of concrete (all applied by hand), and by 1940 the Sepulveda Flood Basin and Dam was finished. It was and is as ugly as sin. Now the Friends of the L.A. River are trying to bring the last semi-wild section back into public awareness, leading walks along the basin on the third Sunday of every month (Tel 323/223-0585). There's a bike path and a walking trail that runs 3.2 miles (with lighting), plus new artistic wrought-iron gates that welcome you in (entrances are at Los Feliz Blvd. in the south and on Riverside Dr. at Victory Blvd. in the north). The former dead zone known as the Cornfield, a railway yard and industrial dumping zone just northeast of Chinatown, is slated to become an extensive series of parks. Even more ambitious are various proposals for lakes and temporary dams to turn the L.A. River into a genuine greenbelt. So far it's all good—until the lab reports come back. Up in the Hollywood Hills, you'll find **Lake Hollywood.** This is a hugely popular dog-walking and jogging area for the midlevel Hollywood executives and drones who live in the neighborhood. You'll see lots of *very* attractive people of both sexes getting all toned up for that audition. The water in the "lake"—it's actually a reservoir—is deep blue-green. It's a very similar scene (although much younger and more boho in tone) around the **Silver Lake Reservoir** in Silver Lake. Unfortunately, there's traffic right next to the jogging path, so walking or running here is hardly a transcendental experience. If you want to walk your dog, it will be safer hanging around the dog park at the south end of the reservoir.

Caddy hacks... At the top of the list are the two 18-hole **Griffith Park** courses, **Wilson** and **Harding,** 4730 Crystal Springs Dr., Griffith Park, east side (Tel 323/664-2255). These are two very popular regulation courses, built in 1914 and 1933, respectively. The Wilson course, a par-71 and 6,610 yards long, has small greens and narrow fairways. The Harding, a 6,945-yard par-72, has trees and water hazards and is considered the more difficult of the two. You can play either course for $22 for 18 holes. Both are always loaded with dressed-to-the-nines Koreans; unless you have a reservation card (available from the pro shop), you won't be able to get in on weekends, but getting a tee time on weekdays is usually fairly easy. There's also a clubhouse, lockers, double-decker driving range, and electric-cart and club rentals. If you have the next Tiger Woods in your family, they also offer a special 10-week course for kids ages 6 to 17. Also in Griffith Park on the west side is the **Roosevelt Municipal Golf Course,** 2650 N. Vermont Ave. (Tel 323/665-2011). This is a very tricky 9-hole, par-33 that involves lots of precision shots because of the narrow fairways. It's the closest 9-holer to Downtown and probably one of the cheapest anywhere at $12 per round. It's the classic duffers' hangout, a place where retirees meet up and gossip while they play. Another very tricky 9-hole course is the one at the **Catalina Island Golf Club,** 1 Country Club Rd., Avalon, Catalina (Tel 310/510-0530). It was built in 1925 and is the oldest golf course in Southern California. The greens fees are $30 for 9 holes ($35 on weekends) and $52 for 18 holes (weekends $57) using the double sets of tees. Working downward in difficulty, there's **Los Feliz Municipal,** 3207 Los Feliz Blvd., Los Feliz (Tel 323/663-7758). This is practically a miniature golf course, consisting of 9 holes that are all par-3s. You come here mainly to work on your pitching and putting. It costs $4 to play the course, which takes about an hour. There's easy parking, no hills to climb, and the "clubhouse" is EATZ, a snack shack that, if it only served beer, would be the ideal place to finish an abbreviated tour of the links. Who comes here? Slackers with no real job but not enough time on their hands to play a real golf course either. If you work up a sweat, then you're doing something wrong. If you feel the need to work on your drives, check out **Lakes of El Segundo,** 400 S. Sepulveda Blvd., El Segundo (Tel 310/322-0202). It's open until 11pm and has seven PGA pros here to talk to about your swing. ***One bonus:*** The wind is always with you.

Feets do your thing... Although the beaches get all the press, most of the people I know agree that the mountains are the most glorious aspect of living here. There are trails everywhere, varying in walkability from easy to impossible. Let's start off with something mild, like the **Griffith Park Night Hikes,** sponsored by the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club (Tel 213/387-4287). Conducted every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evening starting at 7pm, they can attract as many as 500 people on a warm summer night. The hikes range from a 90-minute 4-miler to a 2-hour 8-miler that's considered slightly strenuous. You first have to pay $35 for an annual membership (which goes to the Sierra Club), then you meet up with your fellow hikers behind the old carousel on the east side of Griffith Park. Wednesday nights are now called Love Hikes, aimed at singles looking for a mate. No flashlights or dogs are allowed. You don't have to have a guide to walk the park, of course: There are 53 miles of trails, and maps can be obtained from the **Griffith Park Ranger Station**

(Tel 323/665-5188). Open fires and smoking are prohibited. ***Be warned:*** This isn't a Hollywood set. You can easily encounter fox, coyotes, and rattlesnakes out here. Most recently there was even a mountain lion spotted lurking near the Hollywood Sign. On the Westside the Paseo Miramar ridgeline walk in the Pacific Palisades provides great ocean views. It's a 5-mile round-trip with a 1,200-foot altitude gain through fields of lupine and wild mustard over a broad fire road. Expect to see bikers and possibly a coyote. Parking can be a struggle. To get there: From Sunset Boulevard nearly at PCH, take Paseo Miramar Avenue north and follow it to its end. The trailhead begins at the end of the street. For real cross-country types, out beyond Malibu there's **La Jolla Canyon,** an 11-mile hike with a 2,000-foot elevation gain. The starting point for the hike is **Point Mugu State Park** (Tel 805/488-5223), and the route takes about 6 hours to complete (be sure to carry plenty of water during the summer). You'll get incredible ocean views while walking through one of the few remaining tall-grass prairies. This is true California coastline vegetation: The canyon is very uncrowded and is dotted with 10-foot-high coreopsis plants that sport brilliant yellow flowers during the spring. It's also the western edge of the 65-mile **Backbone Trail,** which runs through the Santa Monica Mountains all the way into Pacific Palisades. From the peaks of the trail, you can see all the way to the Channel Islands off Ventura. If you make it to **La Jolla Valley Camp,** you'll find piped water, restrooms, and picnic tables under the live oaks. Just to remind you that you're not completely in the wilderness, you may hear gunshots coming from a nearby military shooting range—and don't be startled if an F-16 goes screaming over your head, departing from Point Mugu Naval Air Station a few miles away.

One of the most popular and easiest hikes in the **San Gabriel Mountains** is the **Mount Lowe trail,** Mount Lowe Arroyo Seco Ranger Station (Tel 818/790-1151). The trail is just over 3 miles round-trip, but it takes about 90 minutes to climb up and over the 500-foot elevation gain. To get there, you park on the Mount Wilson Road and then head up the fire road under San Gabriel Peak. Mount Lowe was once the upper end of a scenic funicular that crawled along the side of the mountains up here. The railway was a huge tourist attraction around the turn of the

20th century, even giving rise to a tavern that ultimately burned down. Some artifacts from that era remain, including sighting tubes propped on stands that describe what part of the basin you're looking at. If you prefer to gain no elevation but stay at sea level, try walking from **Point Dume** to **Paradise Cove** on the Malibu coastline, part of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (Tel 818/597-9192). It hardly ranks as a hike since the route is totally flat and only about 2 miles long, but it's the best tidal-pool trip in the area. When the tide is very low, you'll find an amazing assortment of sea life at your feet: periwinkles, tube snails, sculpins, mussels, shore and hermit crabs, sea anemones, barnacles, and starfish. The best seasons for these extreme lows are in the afternoons two or three times each month from October through March. Park at Westward Beach on the west side of Point Dume, then walk around the point heading south. The rock here is volcanic and very craggy and sharp, and at times you'll be climbing over it, so wear good sneakers. Don't be surprised if you come across a naked person or two along the way.

Pollution's a beach... The L.A. Department of Public Works has installed new storm-drain diversion channels because there is so much nasty stuff in the runoff. Every summer Angelenos come down with surfer's flu—stomach upset, respiratory infections, skin rashes, and coughs, all caused by the choice mixture of motor oil, fertilizers, pesticides, and animal feces that provide the backdrop to our bathing experience. And the nasty stuff isn't just in the water—it's also in the sand. A few years ago the county spent $1.3 million just scraping the crap off the top layer. Thank goodness for Heal the Bay, the environmental group that monitors pollution levels at the area's beaches.

Okay, now just forget about all that. Los Angeles has 72 miles of coastline: sand bottoms, rock bottoms, reef bottoms, coves loaded with tide pools, wide expanses dotted with volleyball nets, and always convenient, overpriced parking lots nearby. You can always get to the beach, except around **Malibu,** where they don't like the masses using *their* beach. (There are access stairways, but you have to look for them: They're on the 31200 and 31300 blocks of Broad Beach Rd.; 24300, 24400, 24500, and 24700 blocks of Malibu Rd.; and 19900, 20300, and 22700 blocks of

Pacific Coast Hwy.) Of course, you know about **Venice** and **Santa Monica** and **Will Rogers beaches,** all just minutes from Santa Monica. But the closest beach to the city itself—and the least used—is **Dockweiler State Beach,** south of Santa Monica Bay and directly under the LAX flight path. There's lots of parking here, plus dozens of concrete fire rings for your evening barbecue. At the northern end of the beach, near Playa del Rey, college kids play pickup volleyball games. Fishing is allowed, but I don't think I'd want to eat anything that swims in the bay, thank you. If you've got small kids with you, try the aptly named **Mother's Beach** (officially called Marina Beach) at Admiralty and Via Marina in Marina del Rey. This is a small sand beach with no waves and no pebbles in the shore break. The only problem time is after it rains, when the area can get an F rating. For families, Valley teenagers, and treasure hunters, **Zuma Beach,** 30050 Pacific Coast Hwy., is the best choice. No decent surfing here and no snorkeling, but plenty of parking, lifeguards, fast food, and volleyball. It's a bit of a drive from the city, but it's the closest decent beach with something of a wild feel. **Leo Carrillo State Beach,** 35000 Pacific Coast Hwy. (Tel 805/488-5223), is good for families and worth the hour's drive from Santa Monica. There's easy parking and access to the beach, plus great tidal pools loaded with sea hares and starfish. It also has sometimes-decent (though very crowded) waves.

Surf City, here we come... In some ways surfing is closer to the L.A. soul than any other outdoor activity, a sport that brings you into the direct embrace of Our Mother Ocean—or at least above it, important inches in these days of El Niño sewage overflows. At every beach from the Ventura County Line on down to San Diego, it's all long boards and geezer surfers and women out in the water now (your local surf Nazi just may not know how to yell at someone who looks like his mom). Summer is the worst, with small waves and overwhelming crowds; early winter is my favorite, when it's often bright and clear and Santa Anas come whistling in from the desert, holding up the face of the season's steady northern swells. The four most reliable breaks north of Santa Monica are **Topanga Point, Malibu, County Line,** and **Leo Carrillo.** If you plan to bring your board along, however, only Surfrider Beach (named after the slew of '60s *Gidget* movies that was shot here) in Malibu, 23200 Pacific Coast Hwy. (Tel 310/456-8432), is a rival for the breaks in San Diego, Santa Barbara, and the South Bay. Forget about the funky water in the lagoon—it's Malibu, and when it's pumping here the waves are truly magical. For a true retro surfing experience, head south to San Onofre State Beach (Tel 949/492-4872), off the 5 freeway, just south of San Clemente. There's a nuclear power plant right down the beach and great white sharks have been spotted in the water, but are you gonna let that stop you?

Ringside seats for the circus... The real name of the **Venice Boardwalk** is Ocean Front Walk, but then nothing in Venice is quite what it seems. It's claimed that more people come to the boardwalk on a daily basis than go to Disneyland—perhaps because Minnie Mouse doesn't skate around in a thong with her buns hanging out. You'll see all types here, including Angelenos of every hue, class, body shape, and sanity level. Everybody's watching everybody else, except for the rollerblading body beautifuls who skate through the crowds like wisps of fog through a forest. Some people think that the boardwalk is the best place in L.A. to buy sunglasses. Maybe—if by that you mean cheap sunglasses. Out on the sand there are volleyball nets, swing sets for the coulda-been Olympic gymnasts to show off on, and basketball courts just opposite Muscle Beach, on the Venice boardwalk, where some of the best pickup players this side of the NBA will kick your ass free of charge. And then there's **Muscle Beach,** which for my money is better than a trip to the zoo. This is a public weightlifting area right next to the boardwalk, where the bulked-up men and women go through their reps, serenely ignoring the audience. You'll never look at your own body the same way again. There are also tons of shopping, dining, and drinking possibilities in the area. ***One caveat:*** I wouldn't go out wandering out on the sand after dark, whether you're a man or a woman, alone or in pairs.

Camping it up... One major joy of living in L.A. is the abundance of campsites relatively close to the city. It's mainly car camping, naturally. What would you expect? Starting from the south, **San Onofre State Beach,** I-5 exit Basilone Road, toward the ocean 3 miles (Tel 949/492-4872), is the place to go if you want to hang out on moderately deserted beaches and work on your nose-riding technique without being ridiculed by local surf Nazis. The campsite is on the bluffs, next to the nuclear power plant, Interstate 5, and the Marine base at Camp Pendleton. Sounds horrible? You'd think so, but actually only the freeway is an irritant. Because of the power plant, the water here is always warmer than at other beaches, and thanks to the base, this is one of the last stretches of Southern California coastline still in its natural state. To lessen the constant roar of the freeway, look for a campsite in the 30–120 range. Cold showers and flush toilets are available. To the north, **Point Mugu State Park** is a wonderful blend of both mountain and beach. The beach is right across Highway 1 while the Santa Monica Mountains start just behind the campsites in Sycamore Canyon. Hot showers and flush toilets are available; the best sites are directly to the right of the day parking lot, closest to the beach and most secluded from the center of the camp. (Reservations can be made 7 months in advance at Tel 800/444-7275 or online at calparks.ca.gov.) Up in the San Gabriels, in the **Angeles National Forest,** there are more than 110 developed campgrounds and picnic areas (www.r5.fs.fed.us/angeles). Chilao is where I like to go, both for hiking and pretty technical mountain biking. ***And be warned:*** This is true wilderness territory, with unpredictable weather and dry conditions in summer. Every year hikers get lost in the mountains and have to be rescued. For campers who really want to get into the backcountry, this is where you pick up part of **The Pacific Crest Trail,** on its 2,665-mile meander from Mexico to Canada. The PCT, like trails in wilderness areas, are off-limits to bikes. But that still leaves hundreds of miles of great riding, both single track and fire road.

Where to be humiliated in pickup basketball games... Refine your swish at one of the many pickup basketball games that occur at recreation centers or parks all over the city. The following are especially notable. At the **Jim Gilliam Recreation Center,** 4000 S. La Brea Ave. (Tel 323/291-5928), you'll find some of the best amateurs around, city to college, bumping up against one another.

The games happen Monday to Friday from noon to 10pm and on Sunday from 9am to noon. At the **Rogers Recreation Center,** 400 W. Beach Ave., Inglewood (Tel 310/412-5504), you'll have the privilege of getting elbowed by some of the very best players in the city, perhaps even a pro or two. They offer games daily, but the hours vary depending on who's there. The **Westwood Recreation Complex,** 1350 Sepulveda Blvd. (Tel 310/473-3610), is more casual. The players are older, and there are two full courts, both indoors. Where did the Lakers and Clippers go to stay sharp during the NBA strike? To the **UCLA men's gymnasium,** just east of Wooden Center, UCLA campus (Tel 310/825-1135). There are four courts in the two-story complex, and who knows whom you'll bump into?

Fat-tire fanatic... The L.A. basin is surrounded by mountains, and we have some of the best mountain biking this side of, uh, Fresno, no matter what those gearheads in Moab say. For beginners, the **Arroyo Seco trail,** behind the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), in Altadena, is the perfect place to get your feet wet—which you will do if you ride it in the winter or spring. It's 12 miles in and out, with only a 600-foot elevation gain, but there are a lot of water crossings. The trail is used by lots of people, including hikers, dog walkers, and horse riders, so be cautious coming around blind turns. Although the biking isn't strenuous, it can be technically tricky, especially after a wet season. Not only will the water crossings be deep, but there will be a lot of rocks on the trail, so you'll probably have to dismount and walk in some sections. To get here, take the 210 East and the Windsor exit, then turn left and look for the parking area that overlooks JPL—it'll be full of cars with bike racks. Looking toward the mountains you'll see a road going toward JPL and a gated road next to it. This is the trailhead. It starts off as pavement, but turns into hard pack and then sand and then water and then rocks at the end. Always bear to your left, and you'll never get lost. If you're looking for something that will really burn your thighs, follow the Arroyo Seco trail as described, but take the **Brown Mountain Turnoff,** marked by a sign about a half mile in from the entrance gate. This is a relentlessly steep uphill climb of about 4 miles that finally dead-ends at the top of Brown Mountain. Your reward will be one of the most amazing views in Los Angeles—all the way to Catalina.

Just make sure you have good breaks for the intense downhill ride back, and be mindful of deer and mountain lions up here, especially at twilight. Out just beyond Malibu is Sycamore Canyon, which is the mountain biker's version of the La Jolla Canyon Hike (which does *not* allow bikes). If you are with people who are not riding or are beginners, this is the ideal location to visit. There are showers and picnic tables, the beach is right across the road, and the hiking trails here are fantastic. For this ride, park your car at Point Mugu State Park and then bike through the campgrounds into **Sycamore Canyon.** Beginners should simply continue straight into the canyon. There are some small water crossings, but the trail is a very gradual uphill, gently rolling and shaded by sycamore and oak (plus lots of poison oak in the underbrush—so if you get off the trail to pee, be careful). There are no horses on this trail, and the farther up you get, the fewer hikers you'll see. If you want a challenging climb, take the first left as you come out of the parking lot and head onto **Overlook Trail.** As the name suggests, you'll overlook the entire coast once you get to the top, about 2,000 feet up. As you descend on the other side, watch for a single track off to your right. This trail is full of switchbacks—very tricky and lots of fun. It'll loop you back onto the main Sycamore trail in the valley below. Total riding time: about 3 hours. There are hundreds of other trails within an hour's drive from Downtown L.A. in the Santa Monica and the San Gabriel mountains. For maps of all of them as well as advice on what's new and happening, stop in **I. Martin Bicycles,** 8330 Beverly Blvd., West Hollywood (Tel 323/653-6900). All the salespeople here are avid riders and very chatty. You'll probably walk out having spent more than you expected to: The store has a huge selection of biking gear and some of the most tricked-out (and expensive) bikes you've never ridden. They'll also tell you that this is not a good town for road weenies. There's something about the sight of a bike in front of a driver's car on city streets that produces rage. I've had automobile drivers try to force me into the curb, open doors in front of me, and screech to sudden stops with no warning. The bus drivers are even worse. The only place I feel safe riding is around the traffic-free back roads of **Griffith Park.** You get a climb out of it and can also do some fairly high-spinning muscle-building, especially off Riverside Drive or up Commonwealth Avenue. Road bikes can be rented at **Woody's Bicycle World,** 3157 Los Feliz Blvd., Los Feliz (Tel 323/661-6665). They're not the greatest bikes in the world, but they'll do. There aren't many other places to rent either road or mountain bikes here, except for beach bombers out on the Venice Boardwalk. There you'll find shops every 20 feet or so, renting bikes and in-line skates.

The dawning of the age of aquariums... The Santa Monica Pier is not exactly where you'd expect a research center—unless it was in abnormal behavioral psychology—but right at the start of the arcade area, below the merry-go-round, you'll find the **UCLA Discovery Center,** 1600 Ocean Front Walk (Tel 310/393-6149; www.lifesci.ucla.edu/odc). The $3 entrance fee seems a little high for what's basically a tiny fish-petting zoo and bookstore, but if you stop and read the displays, you'll get a clear, relevant overview of the condition of our coastal ocean, primarily the tidelands. If you have a child at all interested in oceanography, surfing, scuba diving, or fishing, come here. And if that catches your interest, you should definitely check out the **Aquarium of the Pacific,** 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach (Tel 562/590-3100). It's nowhere near as spectacular as the Monterey Aquarium but it's pretty good, with nearly 1,000 species in 19 major living habitats and 32 smaller exhibits. High-tech plus: The divers who clean the tanks and feed the fish are equipped with two-way radios so visitors can ask them questions while they work. Arrive early on summer weekends, at 9:30 or 10am, and take the MTA's Metro Blue Line, just $1.25 from Downtown Los Angeles. The aquarium's prices are a little steep: $19 for an adult, $11 for a child, and $17 for a senior. And if you still haven't gotten enough oceanographic ogling, there's also the **Cabrillo Marine Aquarium** on Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro, between Point Fermin and the Port of Los Angeles, 3720 Stephen White Dr. (Tel 310/548-7562). This research facility, established more than 60 years ago, is run by the City of Los Angeles, next to the tide pools of Point Fermin Marine Life Refuge. You can roam the salt marsh and walk out on the fishing pier from here or amble down to the beach. This is a primo spot to come during whale-watching season—late fall when the whales are heading south to Baja, and then in late winter/early spring when they're heading north again. In the summer you come here to learn about grunion, the silvery little sardine-size fish that slither up on the beach to spawn during certain nighttime high tides. The aquarium is free (although a donation is welcomed) and is open until 5pm.

Peerless piers... **Santa Monica Pier** is one of the oldest piers on the West Coast, a 1,600-foot extension over the sands that gets about nine million visitors a years. The five-story West Coaster roller coaster is the only ride of its kind still on a Southern California pier. If that seems too tame, there's always the Pacific Wheel: 130 feet high and the world's first solar-powered Ferris wheel. The star of the Santa Monica Pier, however, is the Looff Hippodrome, a merry-go-round with 44 hand-carved horses, built in 1922. Underneath the Hippodrome is the **Heal the Bay Ocean Discovery Center** with touch tanks and kid-friendly exhibits. The **Marine Studies Lab and Aquarium,** in the Roundhouse on the **Manhattan Beach Municipal Pier,** is even better—it's got a shark tank. For human sharks, check out the **Surfers Walk of Fame** at the **Hermosa Beach Pier**—but be warned: This place is a *zoo* on major summer holidays. The **Redondo Beach Pier** is famous for its July 4th fireworks display, and of all the piers in the area, the **Huntington Beach Pier** is the busiest, pulling in more than 14 million visitors annually. Throw in the skateboarding competitions, surfing contests, bicyclers, in-line skaters, fishermen, wackos, surf Nazis, horny beach bums and you've got a full day in front of you! One of the most enjoyable introductions to Cali beach culture is to bike pier to pier from Santa Monica to Manhattan Beach. Go to **Blazing Saddles,** 320 Santa Monica Pier, for maps.

Stairways to heaven... People may think of L.A. as flat, but residents know its rolling hills and arroyos. Don't believe me? Call the **Echo Park Historical Society** (Tel 213/482-4458) and ask about the Echo Park Stairways Tour. You could also just hit the highlight of the tour: the **131-step stairway** immortalized in the Laurel and Hardy short *The Music Box*. It's between 923 and 927 Vendome Ave. in Echo Park. Out in Santa Monica you can climb the bluffs. There are two stairways here: a concrete one with about 200 steps followed by a wooden one, more forgiving on the knees and slightly shorter at 178 steps. The crowd varies from true stair masters, triathletes in training, to industry insiders to classes of high school kids. The neighbors all hate the stair climbers so please behave. They're at 4th Street and Adelaide Avenue in Santa Monica; parking only between 8am and 6pm. A crawling stairway for rock climbers can be found at **Stony Point Park** in Chatsworth. It is probably not as convenient as your local Bally's, but then rock walls like this aren't poured in a weekend—they're extruded over eons. The 60-million-year-old sandstone boulders and cliff faces are just south of the Ronald Reagan Freeway exit to Topanga Canyon Boulevard and for the last 70 years have been the private training grounds for local pioneers in rock climbing (before that they were most famous as the hideout for bandit Joaquin Murrieta and his gang, in the 1880s). Some of the pitons up top are genuine relics, worthy of museum status, and you won't need carabineers or ropes on most of the house-size boulders. The first men to conquer Yosemite's Half Dome and El Capitan trained here, so you're in good company.

Peace and quiet...finally... If you're looking for a quiet place to gather your thoughts, direct your gas-guzzler immediately to **Lake Shrine at the Self-Realization Fellowship,** 17190 Sunset Blvd., in Pacific Palisades (Tel 310/ 454-4114). Established by spiritual master Paramahansa Yogananda in 1949, the 10-acre site is a natural amphitheater anchored around a deep spring-fed lake, intersected with walkways and sitting areas. In keeping with the SRF philosophy, Lake Shrine is nondenominational. Yogananda initiated Mahatma Gandhi into Kriya yoga, the essence of SRF, and some of Gandhi's ashes are enshrined here in a memorial. The lake is dotted with lotus, ducks, and swans, and large koi cruise languidly in the shallows. There's also a houseboat in which Yogananda lived, a gift store, and a small museum. The very authentic and soothing garden at the **Japanese American Cultural & Community Center** in Little Tokyo is ideal for pretending, if only for a minute, that you're somewhere on the outskirts of Kyoto and not a short loogie from Skid Row. Close your eyes and try not to inhale too deeply. The garden's bamboo, pine, ferns, and moss-covered rocks are tastefully dotted over the grounds, with the essentials of traditional Japanese garden design (a wooden bridge, stone lanterns) that seduce the eye into focusing on the interior view. The garden is open to the public from 9am to 5pm and is accessible from the JACCC's basement level, at 244 S. San Pedro St., Little Tokyo. On a totally different vibe is the **California Plaza Watercourt** in the plaza at 350 S. Grand Ave., on Bunker Hill. There's a 100,000-gallon tank underneath the fountains and when the rolling wave gets pumping back and forth on the water's surface, the effect is hypnotic. In the summer this is one of the best places for free outdoor concerts.

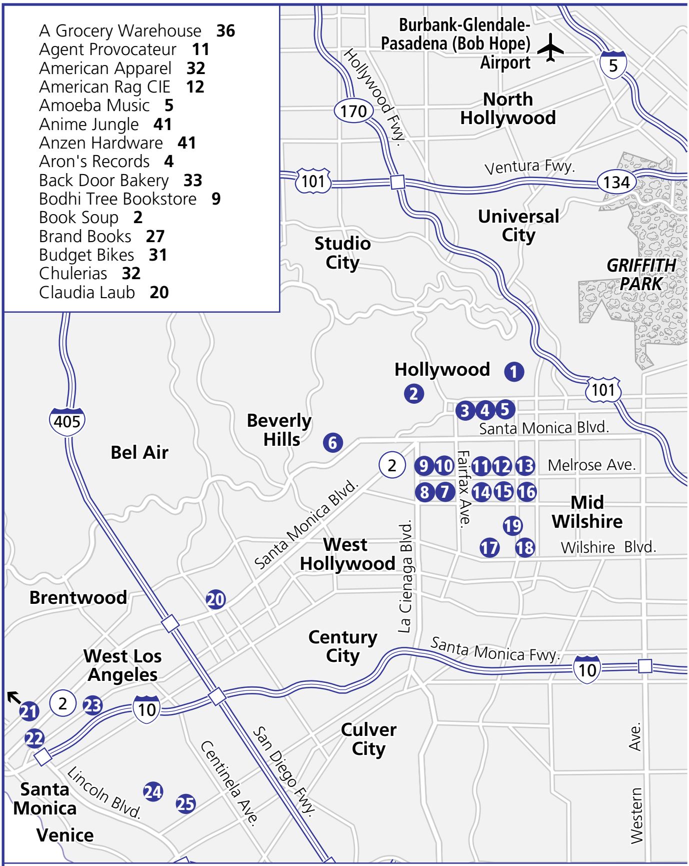
The recovery process... Now that you've exercised, baked your skin, and sweated the toxins out of your gut, it's time to take care of that poor bag of water you call your body. Better yet, hire someone to do the job for you. Let the master technicians at the **Massage Garage,** 3812 Bagley Ave., Culver City (Tel 310/202-0082), give you a light tune-up. Bucket seats and riveted end tables in the waiting room add to the auto body theme throughout. For $45 you get 60 minutes to work the kinks out of your exhausted body. For a more intensive overhaul, check out **Ole Henriksen Face & Body Shop,** 8622 W. Sunset Blvd., Suite A., West Hollywood (Tel 310/854-7700), on the Sunset Strip, where you can be massaged by people who get paid to touch Charlize Theron, Courtney Love, Ben Stiller, and Naomi Campbell. Starting at $100 for a craniosacral massage, the price list goes up to $145 for a 90-minute hot-stone-and-Swedish combination massage. Ole also offers 2- and 3-hour "Tranquility Packages" incorporating mineral jet baths with massage treatments that will melt the many months of stress off of you—which is good, because the waiting list is about that long, so be sure to book far, far in advance. **Tawa's Shiatsu Spa,** 362 E. 1st St., Little Tokyo (Tel 213/680-9141), is one of the best deals in town, offering an hour-long massage for about $60. And don't think for a minute that this is going to be some sensually stimulating, possibly erotic experience. The masseuses will pop and prod and reroute your chi energy flow so that everything is back in balance again. It may even hurt. There's also a small spa for men only.

SHOP

PING

5

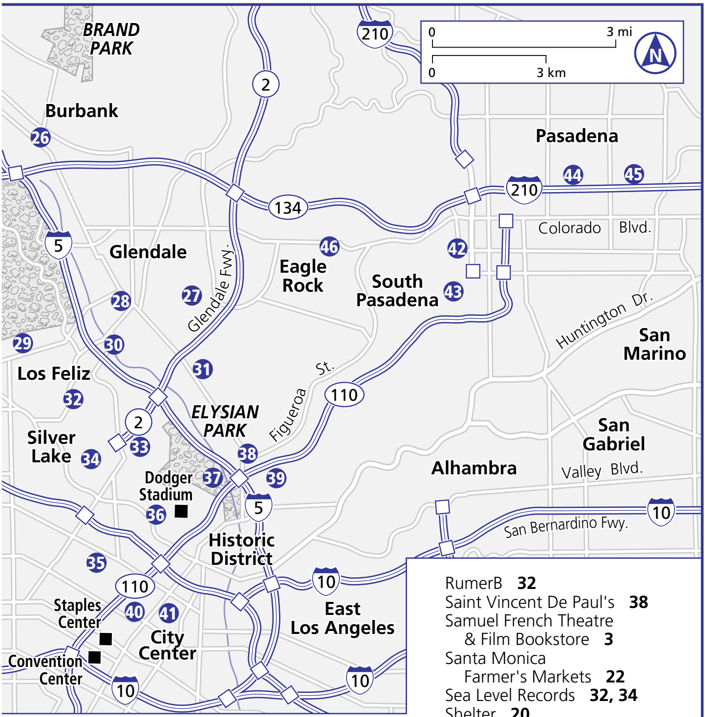
Map 13: Los Angeles Shopping


Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena (Bob Hope) Airport
5
Hollywood Fwy.
170
North Hollywood
Ventura Fwy.
101
134
Universal City
Studio City
GRIFFITH PARK
Hollywood
1
2
101
3
4
5
Santa Monica Blvd.
405
Beverly Hills
6
Bel Air
2
9
10
Fairfax Ave.
11
12
13
Melrose Ave.
8
7
14
15
16
Mid Wilshire
19
17
18
Wilshire Blvd.
Santa Monica Blvd.
West Hollywood
La Cienega Blvd.
Brentwood
20
Century City
Santa Monica Fwy.
10
West Los Angeles
21
2
23
10
22
Culver City
Western Ave.
San Diego Fwy.
Centinela Ave.
Lincoln Blvd.
24
25
Santa Monica
Venice

A Grocery Warehouse **36**
Agent Provocateur **11**
American Apparel **32**
American Rag CIE **12**
Amoeba Music **5**
Anime Jungle **41**
Anzen Hardware **41**
Aron's Records **4**
Back Door Bakery **33**
Bodhi Tree Bookstore **9**
Book Soup **2**
Brand Books **27**
Budget Bikes **31**
Chulerias **32**
Claudia Laub **20**

The Continental Shop **22**
Decades, Decades Two **10**
Destroy All Music **32**
Distant Lands Travel Bookstore
& Outfitters **43**
E N **32**
Every Picture Tells a Story **21**
Fandango Salon **30**
Garage Company **25**
Geographia Map and
Travel Bookstore **26**
George C. Page Museum
at the La Brea Tar Pits **17**
Ginza YA Bakery **41**
Glendale Certified
Farmer's Market **28**
Golyester **12**

Goodwill Industries **29**
Govinda's
International Imports **24**
Grand Central Market **35**
Great Wall Books & Art **37**
Gypsy **30**
Han Cholo **34**
Helen's Cycles **23**
Hennessey & Ingalls **14**
Hollywood Farmer's Market **8**
Hustler Hollywood **3**
Illiterature Bookstore / Pulp **15**
I. Martin **11**
In House **13**
Japanese American
National Museum Store **41**
Kicks **32**


BRAND PARK
Burbank
Pasadena
Glendale
Eagle Rock
South Pasadena
Los Feliz
Silver Lake
ELYSIAN PARK
Dodger Stadium
Historic District
Staples Center
Convention Center
City Center
East Los Angeles
Alhambra
San Marino
San Gabriel
Colorado Blvd.
Huntington Dr.
Valley Blvd.
San Bernardino Fwy.
Glendale Fwy.
Figueroa St.
2
5
10
110
134
210
0 3 mi
0 3 km
N
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

Kinokuniya	**41**
Little Tokyo Square	**41**
Luxe de Ville	**34**
Matty's	**20**
Michael R. Thompson Books	**7**
MOCA Gift Store	**40**
Modernica	**7**
Nahui Ohlin	**34**
Necromance	**11**
OK	**7**
Out of the Closet	**7**
Ozzie Dots	**34**
Pasadena City College Flea Market	**46**
Peron Antiques and Collectibles	**34**
Polkadots and Moonbeams	**32**
Pull My Daisy	**32**
Puzzle Zoo	**22**
Rafu Bussan	**34**
Remix	**16**
Rhino Records	**20**
Rockaway Records	**32**
Rose Bowl Flea Market	**42**
Rubbish	**32**
RumerB	**32**
Saint Vincent De Paul's	**38**
Samuel French Theatre & Film Bookstore	**3**
Santa Monica Farmer's Markets	**22**
Sea Level Records	**32, 34**
Shelter	**20**
Show Pony	**34**
Silver Lake Farmer's Market	**32**
Skeletons in the Closet	**39**
S.K. Uyeda Department Store	**41**
Skylight Books	**32**
Soap Plant	**32**
Squaresville	**32**
Storyopolis	**6**
Supergo	**23**
Taschen Store	**6**
Thailand Plaza	**4**
The Kids Are Alright	**34**
Trashy Lingerie	**12**
Traveler's Bookcase	**20**
Uncle Jer's	**32**
Upon Shop	**32**
Velo Pasadena	**45**
Vinyl Fetish	**1**
Vroman's Bookstore	**44**
Wanna Buy a Watch?	**11**
Wasteland	**11**
Y Que	**32**
Zipper	**9**

Basic Stuff

Consumerism is what L.A. is all about, right? However, having more stuff is the carrot of the American Dream. Why else would we work at terrible jobs for bosses we hate? It's not just the *having* that's a pleasure, it's the whole dance of foreplay and climax—of shopping, then shopping some more, and, finally, buying. Without it, we might as well all be living in trailers out in the desert, sucking on stones. Shopping also fills an existential need, giving Angelenos something to do when they leave the tanning salon and have an hour to kill before their appointment with Dr. Botox.

Target Zones

Unlike many other megacities, Los Angeles is obviously not a walking city. Instead of strolling, your best plan is to drive the grid of streets and do destination-point shopping. In L.A., think of the car as simply an extension of your grasp, a convenient way to pluck that hard-to-reach fruit hanging outside your neighborhood. Once you've incorporated this concept into your subliminal filters, everything becomes much easier.

The short list of destination shopping extends from the foothills of **Pasadena** to the Third Street Promenade in the seaside town of **Santa Monica.** The buying zone winds through **Downtown,** then heads west along **Melrose Avenue, Beverly Boulevard, 3rd Street,** and **La Brea Avenue,** straight through the heart of **Beverly Hills.** Each area has its own character, its own attractions, and its own headaches. **Pasadena's Old Town** is really just a San Gabriel version of the Third Street Promenade; **Melrose** is now well into middle age and looking very tattered around the edges, about to reach that stage of Hollywood funkiness where only tourists can ignore the squalor; **Beverly Boulevard, 3rd Street,** and **La Brea** are the new happening locales, where you can shop with some sense of ease without being upstaged by either the soundtrack or the hoards of know-nothings, pierced and otherwise. **Beverly Hills** is Beverly Hills—so it was and so it ever shall be. Consider yourself warned—this golden village is strictly Suckerville, appropriate mainly for movie moguls, gazillionaire foreigners, and trophy wives. You can shop here, certainly, just like you can visit Main Street in Disneyland and feel you're someplace real. Although the parking is cheap (there are public parking structures), everything else is overpriced. Conspicuous consumerism is the *sine* *qua non* of Rodeo Drive. Morals, ethics, humanism—they carry no value. Snotty shopgirls with silicone implants do. If you want to spend real money and have fun doing it, go to **Montana Avenue** or **Main Street** in Santa Monica instead. The air's a lot better, there are more crazies and good-looking people, and shopping suddenly becomes a way of life.

That being said, you also don't have to head for neighborhoods to get a full culture fix. It's lifestyle shopping now, from bath mats to pickled fish; retro furniture to *That '70s Show* bell bottoms; from how-to salsa instructional videos to candles. Think globally, shop locally.

You've got two choices: chain store hell or trendy independents. Whatever version of cool rules you, you're still going to have to pay. And like everything in this city, it's all about location. For a full-on sensory overload that rivals the Venice boardwalk, take a trip down **Santee Alley** in the Fashion District. Got a shopaholic jones going? You'll satisfy your inner greedhead here even as you attempt to think amidst the cacophony of shoppers, sidewalk shills, and sound systems. Just about everything wearable is here, from shoes to chapeaus and from boas to bustiers. There are also toys, kids' clothes, CDs, electronics, and knockoffs of every imaginable brand. Along the **Third Street Promenade**'s major blocks, you'll find everything from indie bookstores and Barnes & Noble to upscale chain outposts like J. Crew and Abercrombie & Fitch and chain cheapies like Old Navy and makeup giant Sephora. There are also two movie theaters playing the latest mainstream studio releases and a few meat-market bars housing drunken college girls and football frat boys with transparent intentions. El Capitan got a new face-lift, but it seems like Botox—no expression. And along the dirt-encrusted Walk of Fame continue to walk the not so famous—even Godzilla has a star on the Walk of Fame. At **Hollywood & Highland** you can find sad, out-of-work actors and actresses trolling the streets in ridiculous costumes among the walking wounded, peddling free show tickets to *Hollywood Squares* and the latest pilot sitcom of the month. What's new here is the partially outdoor shopping complex whose grand entrance is called Babylon Court, modeled after D. W. Griffith's 1916 movie *Intolerance,* complete with two 35-foot concrete elephants on pedestals. The three-floor partially outdoor mall is home to mid-to-upscale chain stores (Ann Taylor Loft, Bebe, Sephora) as well as chain food (Coldstone Creamery) and Wolfgang Puck's newest trendy creation.

Bargain Hunting

Looking for sales? Try cruising the high-traffic, overpriced neighborhoods, especially Montana Avenue in Santa Monica. The handful of landlords who own the street raise the already astronomical rents so often that any imaginative, risk-taking store doesn't have a prayer and soon goes belly-up. That's when you can swoop in and get all kinds of treasures, up to 85% off. Just drive along at a leisurely speed and keep your eyes peeled for the EVERYTHING MUST GO signs.

Also, don't ignore the "previously owned" option. There's nowhere else in the country with so many large-scale regular swap meets. Mark your calendar: The first Sunday of each month brings with it the **Pasadena City College Flea Market,** featuring tons of free parking and fairly cheap prices (though it tends to be a little too heavy on the bad CDs and horrible homemade art). This is followed on the second Sunday by the **Rose Bowl Flea Market,** acknowledged as the original Big Bang of all swap meets. This is where Japanese buyers come to buy used clothes by the ton. The farther out you go from the main area, the hipper the scene. This is the outsider zone. If you're serious, you'll be there with your flashlight at 4am.

An even more personal shopping experience can be had at weekend garage sales. Check the classifieds in the *Los Angeles Times* or the *Recycler.* Hot neighborhoods include **Santa Monica, Silver Lake, East Hollywood, Los Feliz,** and **Glendale.** A garage-sale expedition is the antithesis of the mall experience, tucked away in the midst of the ultimate mall culture.

The Lowdown

Ethnic one-stops... Santa Monica has become home to a generation of expat Brits, and now there's **The Continental Shop** on Wilshire Boulevard to show for it. Here you can find videos of last year's British TV shows that never made it over here, as well as jams, newspapers, racks of teas, a huge selection of English candies, and all the Marmite you could ever want. Looking for a close encounter of the Japanese kind? **Little Tokyo Square,** formerly Yaohan, in Little Tokyo, has ready-cut sashimi, ivory chopsticks, Japanese magazines, rice cookers, Shiseido soaps, kimonos, and anime videos, plus all the ingredients you need to make a 20-course gourmet Japanese meal. If you're in the market for a well-maintained used car, there's also a wonderful bulletin board here for Japanese kids who are returning home and trying to unload their cars, usually at bargain prices. On Sunset Boulevard you'll find the **A Grocery Warehouse,** which caters to the large Chinese-Vietnamese-Cambodian population residing around Echo Park. It contains a huge fish market, along with other exotica such as fresh rice noodles, spiky durian fruit from Indonesia, aluminum Thai serving bowls, incense, and every type of curry paste and fish sauce imaginable. From cognac to rice, the prices for everything are among the best in town, and everything is superfresh. It's impossible to park in its lot on Sunday, when the place is traditionally jammed. **Thailand Plaza** in Hollywood serves the Thai community in much the same way that Little Tokyo Square caters to local Japanese. Its wide-ranging inventory includes videos, fresh coconuts, dried noodles, serving trays, and packages of condiments that smell icky and taste great. Upstairs is a quirky Thai restaurant that features karaoke singing at night. You can park in the store's own garage, off Sunset Boulevard (turn in the driveway just before the gold-plated shrine out front). **Grand Central Market** in Downtown is really the northernmost suburb of Mexico City. Multileveled, with sawdust on the floor and the omnipresent odor of *sopes* simmering in hot oil, it's jammed all day long with shoppers. Here you'll find fresh produce and fish, goat meat, pig heads, *liquados* (fruit and veggie drinks), a terrific traditional herbal/homeopathic pharmacy, tequila—from rotgut to Reposado—spicy, greasy fast food, and more. ***One caveat:*** The produce throughout is cheap, but you're better off paying a little more at the stalls in the back and making your own selection for top quality. ***Another caveat:*** Parking is expensive. Your best alternative (unless you're really going to shop for the month) is to park down in Little

NICE (SPICE) RACK

Hey, Jerk! Porky! Over here. Looking for some just-off-the-boat Pickapeppa sauce? Hike your dreads down to the ***Right Choice Caribbean and African Market*** *to put the ital back in your inhalations. Home chefs of Caribbean cooking know all about this source for the essential spices, rubs, peppers, marinades, herbs, and oils that go into West Indian and African cuisine—and you can find all of them at Right Choice.*

Tokyo and take the Dash. **Govinda's International Imports** is a must for *pukka sahibs* who crave a taste of the subcontinent. Follow the music and incense up the stairs of the faded pink temple housing the International Society of Krishna and you'll come upon a community store featuring beautiful Indian clothing and accessories for men, women, and children—all sold at a fraction of what they cost in local department stores.

Tokyo prose... In Little Tokyo you'll find **Anime Jungle,** the one-stop source for everything anime—soundtracks, costumes, DVDs, action figures. It's a local outpost for Osaka's Jungle Special Collectors, a cross between Amoeba and Rhino Records in sensibility, specializing in new and used media dedicated to anime, indie films, and live-action FX-heavy movies. Appropriately, it's slightly difficult to find, in the alleyway between the Miyako Inn and the CalFed bank building, just inside the Little Tokyo Mall. If it's something more highbrow you're looking for, try **Kinokuniya,** within Weller Court. This smallish-bookstore covers every aspect of Japan's culture, language, and history. If you're looking for a Japanese writer translated into English, modern or ancient, they've got it here, along with kanji flash cards, visual dictionaries, and even a series of numbingly dull government white papers. For the benefit of fashion victims, they also carry a decent selection of current Japanese magazines: *FRUiTS, Smart, Egg,* as well as the latest *Goth & Lotita Bible.* Kinokuniya is totally silent and always full of pasty-faced Tokyoites rooting about for news of home. Also in Downtown, just on the other side of the 101 Freeway, is **Great Wall Books & Art.** As the name suggests, this is the Chinese version of Kinokuniya. All conversation stops when a foreign devil walks through the door, but just amble over to the English-language section and the regulars will quickly forget all about you! Here you can get a superb six-volume comic-book version of Sun Tsu's *Art of War* ($60 a pop), which teaches the theory of combat by showing examples from Chinese war history. They also have books geared to students of Mandarin and Cantonese, as well as an impressive (and pricey) selection of Chinese medicine and acupuncture tomes—including books on Yuanbao Qigong, the controversial exercise sect.

Armchair travel... So you're heading out of town and need another *Irreverent Guide?* In West Hollywood the **Traveler's Bookcase** has a massive selection of travel books, travel literature, and a variety of gadgets intended to make the traveler's life easier (that leopard-pattern barley-filled neck pillow, for example). In Burbank, near Warner Brothers Studios, **Geographia Map and Travel Bookstore** carries much of the same selection but features an easier browsing format. This is also the place to come if you're looking for weird maps of places most people never heard of. If they don't have the map you're looking for, they'll know where to find it. If you find yourself in Pasadena, head for **Distant Lands Travel Bookstore & Outfitters,** which is half bookstore, half travel-supply shop. In addition to the usual books and travel accessories like passport holders and money belts, it also sells backpacks, language materials, globes, and walking sticks.

Produce supreme... There are **farmer's markets** throughout Los Angeles, West Hollywood to Whittier, Eagle Rock to Silver Lake, Burbank to Pasadena, Century City to South Central. Every day of the week, somewhere in the Southland, a local farmer's market is happening. Santa Monica has four different markets going: the massively popular **Arizona Avenue** Wednesday/Saturday markets (Sat being organic), as well as markets on **Main Street** and at the **Santa Monica Airport.** The **Santa Monica Farmer's Markets** on Wednesday and Saturday is one of the largest produce markets in the state and extremely popular among all those California-Asian-fusion-whatever chefs forever in search of the freshest, smallest, most expensive, and hardest-to-find veggies. Have an aversion to sprays and pesticides and weird waxes on your food? Then do your shopping here. The **Hollywood Farmer's Market** takes place every Sunday morning on Ivar and Selma avenues between Sunset and Hollywood boulevards. Only Hollywood could put on a show like this and call it a market. This bazaar of the best in local produce, organic and fresh out of the ground, rivals its Westside competitors in quality, selection, and prices. Some of the farmers come from as far as Stockton to peddle their misshapen (hey, it's organic!) fruits and veggies to anorexic starlets and graying writer-director-producer has-beens. If it's in season, it's here. There are wandering minstrels, flowers, candles made of soy oil, and the most delicious fat-free tamales you've ever tasted. There is no better way to spend your Sunday morning. A decidedly different spin on produce happens in **Chinatown** on Thursday afternoons. Unless you speak Cantonese, don't bother asking for cooking directions for those *yum yum* leaves or the *samli.* (Everyone knows what to do with bitter melon leaves and lovage—don't they?) Bonus points for getting your fava beans preshelled. And on Saturday mornings you can supplement your greasy Millie's meal with some fresh peaches, thanks to the small but determined **Silver Lake Farmer's Market.** It occupies the tiny little triangle of Sunset Boulevard at Maltman Avenue and has barely two dozen vendors but gets a nod for persistence. Over the hill at the **Glendale Certified Farmer's Market** on Thursday mornings, the selection is somewhat larger but parking is a nightmare and negotiating the sidewalk with a couple of overstuffed bags of tomatoes can put you in a very inorganic frame of mind.

Zeitgeist landmark, audio... And here let us bow down to **Rhino Records,** The Store. This West L.A. retail outlet existed long before Rhino the label/film-video producer. Born in the trunk of a car at record swap meets in the early '70s, Rhino Records was a slack-jawed nursemaid at the birth of L.A. punk. With a seemingly bottomless fascination for stoopid novelty music, its UCLA-adjacent store brought together people whose tastes included punk, hardcore rockabilly, West African high life, and polka. Even after its multimedia brand-name success, the store maintains the neighborly feel that existed back when the used bins held nothing but vinyl and the sneering clerks let you know you were getting more trade-in credit than your scratched disco collection deserved. Today the bins are full of new and used CDs, imports, and Rhino's own idiosyncratic brand of pop. Rhino is one of the handful of L.A. music stores where street sensibility hasn't been swallowed whole by sheer size and corporate mentality. You'll find the same sensibility at **Aron's Records** in Hollywood, an oasis of anti-superstore hyperthyroidism. Aron's has a huge selection of everything from top of the pops to obscure R&B oldies plus almost everything in between, import, domestic, indie, white label. It has a cozy feel, low-tech and funky, and you can almost smell the sweat of the generations of pop-music pilgrims who have made the trek to Hollywood just to cruise Aron's. Part of the appeal is the huge variety, but one must also give a nod to the sales staff. Not only do they know the music in the bins but they won't make you feel like a fool for asking about it. They are *almost* friendly. **Amoeba Music** in Hollywood is the king casino of the indie music set. The loud hum of clinking CD cases echoes off its warehouse walls like pachinko balls. To beat junkies, every pick is a winner—and if it's not, Amoeba buys back at a great rate.

Nice buns... In the heart of Silver Lake, you'll find the **Back Door Bakery**—so named because for the longest time it didn't have a permit to sell retail, and customers had to come around to the back door. Now it's the happening breakfast and takeout spot in the neighborhood, where everyone within walking distance eventually comes to sample the "lemon sex" bars, gourmet ding-dongs, and fresh bread. Right across from the nightclub that defined Silver Lake cool, Spaceland, the Back Door is the neighborhood's closest thing to a community center. They have the best bulletin board in the area, and they don't care if your dog comes in while you shop. Celebs of note include actor Tim Roth and O.J. courtroom star Kato Kaelin. While you're down in Little Tokyo, you must pay a visit to **Ginza YA Bakery,** a typical Tokyo outlet for the particular Japanese take on French breads and pastries. It has the same huge thick-sliced bread packages you can see in every mom-and-pop Tokyo market, as well as potato donuts, curry donuts, and Western-style, totally tasteless rolls and danishes. For takeout, it sells those horrible crustless sandwiches similar to the ones you can purchase on the high-speed bullet train Shinkansen.

Word freaks... Brand Books in Glendale is your cleaner-than-average used-book store. Knowledgeable clerks, an entire room of sci-fi, mystery, and original pulp fiction wrapped in plastic covers. Oxymoron category: Ronald Reagan Studies. **Vroman's Bookstore** in Pasadena is in a class by itself. It's 110 years old, making it Southern California's oldest as well as largest independent bookseller. It's so big they have two satellite locations, both in Pasadena. Well organized and a staff that knows the stock. Bonus points for their Vroman's Gives Back plan that earmarks 1% of every purchase you make to one of 22 local non-profits—nearly $300,000 in 2004. Another literary upwelling on the Eastside takes place at **Skylight Books** on Vermont Avenue, which carries classics, new, alt, art, Hollywood, gay, underground, and award-winning fiction, from both big and small presses, with especially deep mystery and sci-fi sections. It's the biggest and most active literary hang in the area, the kind of place where local writers pop in to sign copies.

Midcentury mania... Everything old is new again. Or at least that's the current theme along Beverly Boulevard, 3rd Street, and La Brea and Melrose avenues. The architectural wizards who defined L.A.'s postwar style were Neutra and Schindler, and the houses they designed were filled with Eames chairs, Art Deco revamped for the postnuclear age, a sort of Palm Springs Lite. It's not modern; it's *moderne* with an *e.* Like pornography, you can't define it, but you know it when you see it.

And what better place to start mining this vein than on Beverly Boulevard at **Modernica,** where you'll find both vintage midcentury furniture and new knockoffs? Here you'll find '50s and '60s antiques, Noguchi-designed lamps, Danish modern tables and chairs in mint condition, and prices to match. Down on 3rd Street you'll find **OK,** which has tons of glassware, most of it new, made from old designs that are still in production from Scandinavia. The old stuff all has a new feel to it, the kind of things you'll find at the Standard Hotel (with whom OK has worked extensively). The store has a core following of influential designers who appreciate things like the classic Vespa motor scooter and Erico phones. The latter you can find here, along with what is probably the best selection of design books of this genre anywhere in the city. The glassware can run into the $1,200 range, but most is priced a grand less. Working the same side of the street, but situated across town in Silver Lake, is **Rubbish,** which has a continually shifting collection of modern and Asian furniture. The prices are better here than on the Westside, although the selection is not quite as extensive. Shopping here is a much more low-key experience.

Habitat... Shelter, on Beverly Boulevard, is run by an architect and designer who designs contemporary furniture and home accessories. Its Thonet chairs are similar to Eames but more comfortable and durable. Got a yen for that David Design laminated-birch ply side table? You'll find it at Shelter. A lot of the furniture is manufactured by craftspeople in Silver Lake and South Central, so you're supporting the local craft scene when you shop here. Other hot items include Japanese kiri-wood boxes, beds, and sofas. If you need inspiration, it also has books on design and photography. Down the street, **In House** is another showcase for local furniture makers, offering designs by Richard Montgomery Lawton (a professor at Otis School of Art and Design) and his partner Mark Zuckerman. Check out the "Circle 3" magazine table, which is included in the permanent collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art. It's yours for a paltry $450. Or the very cool TV cabinet with a window shade to hide the offending media center, just $3,000. Little touches like these are what bring in New York zombies, design professionals, photographers, and more "sophisticated" celebs like Margaret Cho and Christopher Lambert. Also high on the Modern Hollywood list is **Zipper,** where you'll find a mix of new takes on retro designs along with futuristic 21st-century bizarro-world accoutrements. This is the kind of place you can walk into and find 10 things you weren't looking for, but simply *have* to have—like recycled vintage milk bottles with words etched into them, Prada-esque pet-carrier bags, votive candles with pulp magazine covers plastered on, gummy-bear lights, or that cardboard rocking chair, which only costs $850 and will last a really long time as long as you don't have a cat. Who says Los Angelenos don't recycle? L.A. has a taste for all things temporary, so even in contemporary home fashion, we shoot for the disposable.

Used (or refused)... If you're concerned about reducing our bloated landfills, give nature a break: Recycle your fashion. The top of the cultural compost is a name familiar to us all, **Saint Vincent De Paul's.** Its warehouse in the dead zone east of Chinatown and south of Atwater is decades-old and hangar-size and not what it used to be, according to veteran junkologists. But rest assured—St. Vinnie's still dredges up more than its daily share of treasures amidst the trash. Clothes, furniture, household goods, the sad detritus of failed businesses and forgotten families—they all wash up here in abundance, left on the racks when the tide recedes. Say a prayer in the holy name of junk and finger that collar. Is it really silk? Of course it is. Maybe. Hollywood Boulevard's **Goodwill Industries** facility is a truly classy thrift store, right down the street from the Soap Plant and all that Gen Y/*Swingers* frenzy on Vermont Avenue. The store is well lit, clean, very reasonable, and carries a huge selection of clothes. Best of all, the clothes are arranged on racks by price, not color as is usually the case.

High-end vintage... Set amid cool, modernist stores on the La Brea strip, **Golyester** is also a vintage-clothing outlet, but you'd never know it by the prices. The items are all high-end and in perfect condition, like nice rayon dresses for $485 or a Hawaiian suit (skirt-blouse-jacket combo) for $125. It also deals in textiles and has the best selection of '20s-through-'50s curtain fabrics you'll find anywhere. Complete sets can go for as much as $2,500 (though most are way cheaper). Along with Chinese shawls and embroidered silk kimono sleeve bands, you'll find paintings, colored photos, and prints. The sales girls range from ex-hippies in pajamas to young punker girls with tribal tattoos; the clientele are collectors, older Beverly Hills couples in Panama hats, and other tattooed punker girls with tribal tattoos. The store looks like a New York loft, with columns, exposed rafters and ducts, and distressed concrete floors. **Decades** is the place to go if you're big on high-end vintage and designer labels. Here you'll find Hermès handbags, leather and suede jackets, Valentino gowns, and year-round wearables with a '60s and '70s vibe. It's upstairs from its sister store, **Decades Two,** which has affordable delights ranging from Chloe pants and Prada shoes to sundresses from Tracy Reese, Donna Karan, and Vivienne Tam. Back on La Brea Avenue, **American Rag CIE** was one of the first to recognize the fine-wine appeal of vintage clothing. It offers classic European designer clothes and shoes, as well as vintage martini shakers and cigar accoutrements for the ring-a-ding-dinger in you.

Strange and bizarre, disturbing and wonderful... "Part of you thinks it's in poor taste. Part of you wants an XL." That's the motto of **Skeletons in the Closet,** the gift store at the L.A. County morgue on North Mission Road. Simply *dying* to have a beach towel with the chalk drawing of a body's outline? Or a baseball cap with LOS ANGELES COUNTY CORONER stitched on the brim? How about some body outline–shaped Post-its, or a garment bag labeled BODY BAG? For those with subtler tastes, there's even a lapel pin of a foot with a toe tag on it. Delightful. They only accept cash and checks, however. And while you can order a lot of this stuff by mail, there's nothing like a visit to the gift store itself, located on the morgue's second floor, down a drab institutional hallway. In a similar (open) vein is **Necromance,** on Melrose Avenue, which is basically a gift shop for Satanists, anatomy students, and people who just dig bones. Need an alligator skull for your ex-spouse? Or maybe a rat skull for your agent? This is your boneyard of choice. The prices aren't great, but just think about the poor creature who gave its all for your sick sense of decor. They also sell vintage funeral items and lots of books about and featuring dead people. In Los Feliz you'll find **Y Que,** which in Spanish means "And so?" This is where the white-trash culture comes to celebrate its roots by browsing through a mix of vintage cartoon lunchboxes, Menudo artifacts, shlock-pop iconography, and black-velvet art. Everything is cheap, and it's impossible to leave without buying something. Y Que was into the retro appeal of the '70s long before it became a movie high concept. This is the perfect place to buy stocking stuffers for your favorite Gen-Y slacker. Around the corner from Y Que is the **Soap Plant.** It's impossible to say too much about this place. Before moving back to the Eastside, this all-purpose boutique was the original anchor for the explosion of retail madness along Melrose Avenue back in the early '80s; it has the best and strangest assortment of must-have pop-culture books (embracing every culture and every aspect of pop), and its assortment of Mexican arts and crafts, both kitsch and otherwise, is astounding. Plus, there are tons of toys, earrings, dishes, and weird accessories. And there's always the soap and body unguents that were the original impetus for the store's existence. This is truly one of L.A.'s great treasures. Bonus points for La Luz de Jesus Gallery in the back (p. 122). **Gypsy** in Sunset Junction is your one-stop shop for ethnic masks, incense, and Indonesian penis and vagina candles. (Honey? Where are those candles? Are they all gone?) There's also a stud wall of pewter and silver earrings for your lobes or for dressing up Prince Albert. Although you can go around the world in 40 steps, its mishmash of cultures exudes an air of the Venice boardwalk without the sand.

A different kind of haircut... No, it's not Australia, but crikey, **Pink Cheeks** in Sherman Oaks will get you that L.A. must-have, totally bare Brazilian look down under. I mean *way* down under. Rumored to have been started by Pamela Anderson, who just got tired of shaving, the style has become the standard for young women locally. For $45, the oh-so-gentle staff will whisk away any remnant of puberty from your privates. For a cheaper rip-off, go to **Matty's** instead, where the Playboy is considered more chic than a full Brazilian, and you can get a full facial, too. But if it's something a bit more, ahem, public you have in mind, then **Fandango Salon** in Silver Lake is the place to come to tend to the locks (on your head). They specialize in curly-hair issues and have a steady Hollywood clientele. Owner Barb James was a high-octane punk in the L.A. scene and, predictably, she's also a master at color. It's a friendly and totally unpretentious salon, the hub of the community around this end of Sunset Junction. Their eight chairs are usually full, so call ahead. ***Star alert:*** Pee-wee Herman's a sometimes regular, as are folks off *Mad TV.*

Living treasures of Little Tokyo... Although New York is more like Tokyo in feel (concrete and skyscrapers, plus zillions of pedestrians, all out shopping wildly), L.A. is a lot closer in terms of history, culture, and a sense of kinship. The Japanese imprint on L.A. is deep and significant. Little Tokyo could easily have been Disneyfied, but in spite of misguided attempts at community redevelopment and the bully tactics of Japan-based corporations, the flavor of the area remains intact. When you shop here you get a little taste of everything relating to contemporary Japanese aesthetics, fads, trends, and obsessions—and all of it about 6 months late. We're talking last year's cute robots to the hot anime character of the moment, skateboard fashion, and car-culture trinkets. And then there are places like the **S.K. Uyeda Department Store,** a Little Tokyo veteran. It's a time capsule of the '50s, offering well-made and affordable futons and coverlets, *yukata* (light cotton summer kimonos), *geta,* or wooden-block sandals made in China for $14 (the Japanese ones, made from better wood, are way more expensive), *happi* coats, *tabi* socks, bolts of cloth, and Nagon hair dye (a must for Japanese women of a certain age). For gardeners and carpenters, **Anzen Hardware** is the sort of secret you don't ever want your rivals to know about. It's been here since just after World War II. If you need any highly specialized and supersharp Japanese woodcarving implements, this is the place to look. It also has stools for outdoor bathing, culinary knives, and assorted '50s-style Japanese home tools. Back on 2nd Street is **Rafu Bussan,** a Little Tokyo landmark that has managed to survive redevelopment, the era of the strong yen, and riots. They sell really affordable household Japanese ceramics, tea sets, sake sets, and instant sushi-rice mix way cheaper than the grocery stores. They also have great sale prices, and the elderly Japanese women clerks are so polite and graceful that you'll feel guilty you're not buying more.

Pacific rim shots... If you're enamored of the simplicity of traditional Japanese interiors but don't have the budget for the antiques stores of West Hollywood, check out **E N,** a small storefront in Silver Lake. Owner Meg Okomoto comes from Tokyo but gets most of her stock from the Kansai plain, down around Kyoto, bringing back the kind of family-owned castoffs you might find at a neighborhood temple fair. She has large tantsu chests, silk kimono and wall hangings, wooden toys, lacquer ware, iron teapots, bamboo screens, sewing boxes, ceramics, and loads more, most used but some new. The selection changes seasonally and you won't find better prices anywhere this side of Kamakura. Just over a mile away is **Uncle Jer's,** a world-beat boutique that has been a Los Feliz/Silver Lake institution for decades. The store carries a full line of exotic candles/soaps/perfumes/incense along with artifacts and crafts from India, Nepal, and Southeast Asia. There's a huge jewelry selection and its clothes manage to blend a definite ethnographic authenticity with a modern street-wise sensibility. Like the Soap Plant, right up the street, Uncle Jer's is packed solid in December because you can always find something tasteful, reasonable, and unusual here. Just down Sunset is **Chulerias,** Spanish for "nice little things." Chulerias caters to a particular Silver Lake sensibility, one that recognizes Frida Kahlo as a saint and doesn't mind mixing Nepalese prayer bowls with Oaxacan hearts and hammered tin lamps from Guanjuato. The owner is from Mexico City but his artsy-crafty stock comes from all over the Pacific Rim, Asia to Latin America, Tierra del Fuego to Echo Park. For your "Brown Power" fix, come by **Nahui Ohlin** in Echo Park for T-shirts dedicated to everything Che, Aztlan, Chicano, Salvadorian, or Guatemalan—all dished up with a sense of humor/revolution/art. You'll also find jewelry, baby clothes, CDs, and a small but detailed selection of books on the cultures of Mexico and Central America.

Clothes for slumming celebs... Echo Park's **Show Pony** has clothing as art, featuring more than 20 different designers, mostly local. It varies from reworked vintage sweaters and skirts to blouses with ruffles, appliqué, handmade one-of-a-kind oddities, hand-dyed and printed T-shirts. Prices aren't great, but the patrons—White Stripes' Meg White, Lindsey Lohan, Maggie Gyllenhaal—don't seem to care. **Han Cholo,** next door, is also a slumming-celebs magnet. It's mostly men's jewelry, 14K gold, silver, platinum, brass. Its not-so-subtle, gang-influenced body art is popular with not-so-subtle egos like Snoop Dogg, Paris Hilton, and Kelly Osbourne. Or at least their stylists shop here. They have brass knuckle belts, rhinestone-eyed skull rings, pendants, and chains. The bling ranges in price from $100 to $2,000. They've also got hand-painted mesh T's, hoodies, and the ever-popular "L.A. Fingers" design depicting the two-handed gang sign for El Lay. (Usually sold out.) ***Added bonus:*** The art gallery next door has hand-painted skateboard decks.

One-of-a-kinds... **The Kids Are Alright** is not a maternity shop but rather an homage for not-quite-grown-up girls who don't mind a good head-banging session. Lots of local designer gear that includes kilts, poplin dresses, glitter strappy sneakers, "vegan" belts (looks like leather, tastes like vinyl). Most unusual whazzit? item: cashmere sleeves, essentially a cashmere sweater sans trunk. And it's not just for the ladies. They also have Edward An and Mon Petit

Oiseau for the boy kids. Just across the street is **Luxe de Ville,** which is also a resource for very eccentric outfits. How about a tartan silk ruffled kilt ($75) or a man's pinstriped business shirt appliquéd with the Virgin of Guadalupe on the back ($80)? They also have lots of straw and macramé and feathered hats along with loads of baby-blue Paisley dead stock jeans from the '60s. Star alert! Jane's Addiction members shop here as do the ubiquitous stylists. West in Silver Lake, **Pull My Daisy** is another place to troll for local designers output. They also carry fat leather-band Dean watches, Nemo cuffs, and Ben Shermans, a blend of oddities, high fashion, and kitsch.

Mentioning unmentionables... It doesn't take a private dick (or even a very public one) to inspect some of the best of what's kept mostly undercover at **Agent Provocateur** on Melrose Avenue. Once past the racy store window display, the thongs, bras, and stockings come alive on the two gorgeous lingerie-model types that greet you at the door. The half-dressed clerks display store wares, lightly covered up by a buttoned-down '50s-style pink waitress uniform designed by fashion dominatrix Vivienne Westwood. Transferring that kind of sex appeal to your body doesn't come cheaply. The midprice range for a bustier is about $350 and around $95 for your ho-hum bra; basic-but-fabulous silk panties start at around $55. The thank-you-ma'am-may-I-have-another section has crystal-studded collars and rhinestone handcuffs, elevating spanking to an exquisite art form. The boudoir-style dressing rooms with big velour couches and silk curtains transform even the slightest suggestion of raunch into refinery. One of the marketing slogans says it best: "A gentleman is expected to rise when a lady enters a room." **Trashy Lingerie,** on the other hand, is proud of its reputation as a high-priced stripper outpost and sensual outfitter to the stars. The parade of celebrity shoppers includes Drew Barrymore, Gwyneth Paltrow, Winona Ryder (yes, she paid), Demi Moore, Cher, and Cameron Diaz, to name just a few. With even higher prices than Agent Provocateur, you may have to pick up a part-time exotic dancing gig to pay for these little frills. But here, high prices justify quality: High thread counts aren't just for sheets, and no special request goes unheeded. The on-site tailors are favorites with local well-dressed drag queens who need larger sizes than the run-of-the-mill ano-MAWs (anorexic Model-Actress-Whatevers). The British husband-and-wife duo working the tape measures are like the parents you never had, able to talk frankly about your sexual needs and the clothes you need for satisfaction. Shy people be warned—the dressing rooms are tiny and the clerk will think nothing of throwing that little curtain open while you're in a cupless and crotchless red-lace number. The cool thing is, no one cares. And men are welcome, so long as they pay the $5 annual membership fee. **American Apparel** has gotten a lot of press for their "sweatshop-free" label and indeed their 100% cotton undies, boy shorts, and unstructured underwear line is simple, comfy, and guilt-free (or so I've been told). They also have form-fitting stretchy sundresses and have now branched off into baby clothes and sweats. Still, their soft-porn advertising grates. They were strictly for the girls, but in 2005 a "boys store" opened in (where else?) West Hollywood.

Gewgaws, knickknacks, froufrou... If you can't lose those last 5 pounds and aren't rich enough to afford a boob job or a new dress—accessorize! Isn't that what *Cosmo* says? Come on in to **Polkadots and Moonbeams** on West 3rd Street, where you'll find rhinestone multicolored hair clips galore, butterfly clips, bra-strap headbands, chokers, beaded vintage sweaters, and vintage bathing suits, plus some new stuff, too. P. and M. is fairly particular about the quality of the "preworn" merchandise, and the prices are reasonable. Also check out the crocheted bag with pink plastic roses for $75. **Wanna Buy a Watch?** on Melrose Avenue, a wonderful oddity in this retail rave, is simply the best source in the country for used (er, "preowned") quality timepieces of yesteryear, the sort of things from which chronographer's wet dreams are made. We're talking vintage Cartier, Breitling, Omega, Movado, Girard, Tudo, Patek, Rolex—the jewelry cases are crammed full of classics. Got $22,000 burning a hole in your pocket? How about a circa 1950 Rolex Oyster Chronograph? Or, for those on a budget, an "adorable" little lapel-pin watch that plays a musical phrase—only $350. Everything is restored and guaranteed to work. Browsing for a timepiece here is the way watch-shopping should be: elegant, slow, and respectful.

Set stylists' resources... This being the heart of the movie industry, there are stores here that would be labeled junk stores (at the worst) and antiques stores (at the most pretentious) elsewhere. Just as the rag trade found a market in used and abused jeans, there's a profit to be found in the cast-offs of someone's garage if it fits into the latest period-piece film. **RumerB** has a mix of decorative arts, antiques, collectibles, old photos, bentwood furniture, and an assortment of cement garden animals guaranteed to enrage your neighbors. Why get a troll when you could have a cement replica of the California grizzly bear? On the same block is **Peron Antiques and Collectibles,** which specializes in items from the 1880s to 1940.

No one will believe it's secondhand... Profits from the **Out of the Closet** thrift stores go to Aids Project Los Angeles, but that's just the icing on a delectable selection of designer-name folderol. Think men's and women's couture, of impeccable degree, and in *pristine condition.* Dedicated followers of fashion salivate over the workmanship. Over at **Squaresville** on Vermont in the shadow of Griffith Park, it's a vision in vintage-moderne, strictly '60s and '70s. Bell-bottoms, beaded sweaters, jumpsuits, the full retro doppelganger come back to haunt us. It can border on punk grunge, modeled by the tattooed-pierced lemmings of Gen Y–Z. A totally different generation, but one equally clothes-obsessed, hangs out at **Ozzie Dots.** You come here when you want to make a *statement,* something over-the-top, queen-size. Besides clothes, it has loads of accessories, hats, belts, ties, and shoes. This is a place that Hollywood stylists have on speed dial. **Wasteland** has two stores, one in Santa Monica and the other on Melrose Avenue. Both are popular—some say the Wasteland stores have the best vintage in L.A.

Shoe fetish... For shoppers of both sexes with a major sense of retro style, there's only one place to go: **Remix,** owned by Paul Glynn—whose late, lamented Cowboys and Poodles store helped to ignite the current boom in high-grade vintage wear back in the '80s. Glynn has a huge selection of '20s–'70s dead stock (items that were never worn and never sold). Best of all, you sit in these elaborate Jon Bok folk-art thrones to try the footwear on. People tend to go a

MUSEUM SHOPS

Yeah, I know. You came out to L.A. for the art, the culture. But the ***MOCA Gift Store*** *on Grand Avenue in Downtown is a great resource for contemporary art books, MOMA catalogue gift items, local artists' limited editions, jewelry, weird books, magazines, dishes, and decor, and all sorts of additions to your house or body that are sure to stop (or start) conversation. Highly recommended. The gift store in the* ***George C. Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits*** *is much more scientifically oriented. You need to have a major obsession with extinct species to get your rocks off here—which makes it perfect for your Jurassic Park–fixated teen (or preteen). Meanwhile, at the* ***Japanese American National Museum Store*** *in Little Tokyo, you'll find specialized books about the Japanese immigrant experience in the U.S., along with "got rice?" T-shirts, nice but pricey pottery, and videos on Japanese cuisine. Still, I bet you a pint of sake you'll never see a genuine passport-carrying Japanese in here.*

little crazy when they discover this place. (Susan Sarandon reportedly came in and bought 19 pairs in one visit.) The prices are also extremely reasonable, ranging from $35 to $120—less than you'd pay for new tennis shoes. For a slightly younger take on footwear, try **Kicks,** at Sunset Junction in Silver Lake. As the name suggests, they're big on sneakers here, especially vintage dead stock along with retro-style new models. Displayed behind plexiglass, the stock almost looks worth the price. It's mostly old Nikes but also some Vans.

Music/records... **Upon Shop** is a DJ's favorite for digging for the hard-to-find vinyl—jazz, reggae, roots of modern R&B, and hip-hop soul. This makeshift storefront in the heart of hip Sunset Junction is an oasis of cool without really trying. Latex-paint simplicity, green wool couch in the window where people actually sit, and aging speakers on egg crates make it feel like a house party for the real underground set who not only live the music but know where it came from. On the walls are casually hung local artist exhibits. In the bins are such vintage classics as *Soul on Ice,* an original copy of John Lennon's *Imagine,* and rare Papa Large. Every Friday night people venture from all over the city to pack this joint for hip-hop karaoke. The 'tude here is ultracasual and the traffic just as laid back. **Vinyl Fetish** is where punk music first found a home on

Melrose back when the avenue was still a hipster hangout. Now CDs are old hat, Melrose Avenue is a joke, and punk is hatching yet a third generation. Vinyl Fetish, meanwhile, just gets bigger. After years of having stores on Melrose Avenue and on the Eastside, they've consolidated their various outlets into one "superstore" in Hollywood, just north of Amoeba. They have clothes; tons of rare and strange, scary vinyl; DJ accessories (needles, turntable pads, record bags); and four state-of-the-art listening stations where you can listen to anything they stock. Punk, industrial, ska, Goth, indies, rockabilly, industrial, and lots of hard-to-find collectibles. **Destroy All Music** is another major punk-music source. If you never got a chance to gob a mucous missile at the Urinals or the Damned or Thatcher on Acid, here's your chance for a virtual scene. It's all punk, all the time, both in CD and vinyl formats. It also has a huge selection of new T-shirts, stickers, 'zines, posters, and even a stack of vintage *Slash* magazines. And it's not just punk but also noize, hard-core, lo-fi, garage, and experimental. **Rockaway Records,** also in Silver Lake, has a huge collection of collectible vinyl, '60s memorabilia, and bins and bins of used and new CDs. Being right in the heart of hipster heaven, it also has loads of Silver Lake bands on indie labels at rock-bottom prices. The selection of new CDs isn't red-hot, especially if you're looking for something other than rock, and the prices, I'm sorry to say, kind of stink. But they're my local nonchain-store outlet, so I put up with them. Besides, they do get a hefty and constantly changing supply of used CDs (there are a lot of music-industry drones in the neighborhood, and around the first of the month a lot of people unload their collections to make rent). In Echo Park, just east of the Echo, look for **Sea Level Records,** which manages somehow to service both Echo Park and Silver Lake hipsters without feeling clichéd, precious, or provincial. They've got a good selection of local indie acts, a hair salon in the back loft, and they also sell tickets for Echo/Spaceland shows.

Bookstores with a twist... The **Bodhi Tree Bookstore**—named for the spot where Buddha finally got hip—is the prototypical L.A. outlet for all things spiritual. The place reeks of incense, and the people drifting through have blissful looks of focused determination as they search for the One True Path. Looking for that first edition of Lewis Carroll's classic *An Elementary Treatise on Determinants with Their Application to Simultaneous Linear Equations and Algebraic Geometry?* Step into **Michael R. Thompson Books,** where rare books are common, and there it is—the 1867 edition, with the covers just slightly bowed. But hey, what do you want for $1,750? At the other end of the rainbow is a folio containing the original transcriptions of the first trip to the moon, containing every single line of the entire trip's conversation between the *Eagle* and Houston. It's the original handout that NASA gave to the press at the time. There are probably only 50 of them in existence, and at $950 you'll be getting a piece of modern history cheap. The wonderful **Hennessey & Ingalls** is a rarity on Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade: an establishment that caters to something other than your gut or your image. It has L.A.'s largest collection of books on art, interior design, and architecture, ranging in tone from totally academic to kitsch/camp obsessiveness. If you're in town during the first week of November, be sure to drop in on its annual 20%-off sale—no small chunk of change for some of the items here. In Hollywood, the **Samuel French Theatre & Film Bookstore** is like a time trip back into a far, far different era from the one tripping down the Walk of Fame outside. It has a huge (and ultimately very depressing, when you think about it) collection of scripts from movies and TV shows. Many of them you won't recognize, either because they were failed pilots or because they were on the tube way, way before your time. All those former-cheerleader actress-wannabes from Indiana who've just arrived at the Greyhound station down the street head straight here to start working on their audition performances. (They'd be smarter to go directly to Frederick's for some trashy underwear.)

Browsers' havens... **Book Soup** is just about the only reason I can think of for coming over to struggle with parking on the Sunset Strip. It's a full-service bookstore, blessed with one of the largest and best selections of new literature and hard-to-find but-still-in-print titles anywhere in the city. Plus, the guys in the back really know publishing. It's also a great place to pick up autographed copies by local writers. It gets bonus points for giving a discount at the cafe next door when you buy something. **Illiterature Bookstore,** in West Hollywood, is the kind of place that writers love, especially if they're suffering from writer's block. There are a lot of would-be and actual authors in the neighborhood, so, of course, the store stocks a large selection of inspirational books. There's a well-chosen bestsellers area and a lot of well-written but not necessarily commercial novels. One-third of IL's customers come by every 10 days or so—it's that kind of bookstore, a place where you'll always enjoy browsing and probably end up buying more than you intended. The local outlet for **Taschen Store** lives up to the art-book publisher's rep, offering an abundance of eye candy of every persuasion: surfing, homoerotica, midcentury soft porn, architecture, urban graphics, advertising, and other Zeitgeist imagery, from Southern California to southern India. The Philippe Starck–designed store sits on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, a quiet but disturbing presence—like the eccentric rich uncle who is just a bit too familiar when he plays with his grandnieces.

Between the covers for kids... It may cost you more than taking the kids to a theme park by the time you get out, but a trip to **Storyopolis** in West Hollywood will certainly leave an impression on their burgeoning little brains. You've got to do something to compete with the PlayStation, and you're likely to find that something here. It carries only "fine-art-quality" children's literature, including large-format lithographs and paintings from some of the most popular kids' books of all time. Most Saturdays the store also hosts story hours featuring an author or illustrator. Uptight parents who prefer spending family quality time prepping their newborn for college entrance exams with a 24-hour Mozart infusion into the nursery will love **Every Picture Tells a Story** on snooty Montana Avenue in Santa Monica. It's a kids' store where you wouldn't dare let your monsters off the leash. They have tastefully framed children's book illustrations, but the rigid environment is off-putting. However, the collections are pretty impressive—original Dr. Seuss from *The Cat in the Hat* and *The Lorax* and Garth Williams's *Flossie and Bossie*—but the my-kid's-destined-for-Montessori (and what is yours up to this fine prep-school-before-preschool day?) attitude makes the local public library and a color copier a somewhat more attractive and less competitive choice.

Paper, plus... Located next door to Illiterature is a classy little gift store called **Pulp,** which (as you might expect) has all kinds of great paper products, including desk accessories, handmade Italian leather journals, handmade paper, an extensive eclectic left-of-center card line, reproductions of vintage card cases, hand-sewn Japanese notebooks, retro clocks, and Italian spiral paper clips—in short, a smorgasbord for any writer who might like to go shopping in an effort to avoid the real drudgery. The prices are reasonable, so you'll easily find something you like without dropping a wad of money. Much less affordable but very impressive is **Claudia Laub** on West Beverly. This is definitely *not* your neighborhood Kinko's. Claudia's is a print shop with a difference: It actually uses antique letterpresses to handprint your order. Virtually any image can be made into a die, then set into a block and printed onto paper. Being so labor-intensive, the result obviously costs an arm and a leg. Business cards, for example, can run $500 to $800 a set—not the sort of thing you'd toss around casually. It also sells beautiful graduation and wedding cards; "charm cards" ($6.50), which have charms pasted or sewn on them; wrapping papers and ribbons; handmade papers; and individually printed memo pads ($7.50 apiece).

Toys for adults... (Not *those* kinds of toys. Geez.) Who says cults are for religious zealots only? Out here in La-La land, movie cults transform the ordinary fan into a part-collector, part-obsessed-nerd hybrid that crosses the line into complete fantasy and possible restraining-order territory. At **Puzzle Zoo** on Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade, serial cult movie buffs can fight the dark side at home (Darth Vader hyperventilation optional) with an autographed Count Dooku *Star Wars* light saber and go boldly where no man's ever gone before (at least as a full-fledged adult) with classic *Star Trek* promos signed by creator Gene Roddenberry. True to its store name, Puzzle Zoo also has puzzles, but the serious logicians flock to its glass cases to drool over the collectible chess pieces—the highest-cost set price tags at $4,600 for mouth-blown, hand-cut, full English Tutbury crystal. No wonder playing fantasy seems more appealing than reality. Don't hate the player, hate the game.

Dildos 'R' Us... All lit up like a supermarket and laid out like a chain bookstore, so you can get your coffee buzz before your vibrator. Step over owner Larry Flynt's cement handprints, immortalized next to a tall pole where colorful fluorescent lights spiral up and down towards a giant rotating globe, and prepare to enter another realm. Welcome to **Hustler Hollywood,** where you can find Ménage à Trois massage oil, sexual greeting cards, videos detailing every possible physical penetration known to man (and woman), surprisingly demure lingerie, and, of course, a large selection of dildos.

Easy rider... On the other hand, maybe you need a bigger machine between your thighs. If you think a Harley Davidson is simply a bulky aphrodisiac, you'll want to check out the **Garage Company** in Culver City. This is where old motorcycles come to be reborn—Ducatis, BSA, Matchless, Indian, Norton. Cited as one of the best classic-bike outlets in the country, the Garage Company has everything from out-of-print manuals to impossible-to-find parts, decals, helmets, videos, and books. The owner has 150 bikes of his own.

Road weenies rule!... But if its simply shapelier thighs you're after, then try seeing L.A. on two wheels, self-propelled. Since our mass transit pretty much sucks, car-haters have taken to bikes with a vengeance and thankfully there are decent bike stores pretty much all over town. On the Westside you have to begin with **Helen's Cycles,** nearly 70 years old and now with five locations, from Santa Monica to the South Bay to Arcadia. Looking for the latest Cannondale cross-country dual suspension thrasher or simply heel pads for your SIDI shoes? Stop by the Santa Monica store. They also get major bonus points for being early and consistent sponsors of AIDS LifeCycle, California's biggest AIDS ride, held every June. In the midtown area, there's **I. Martin,** also ALC sponsors and thanks to their proximity to both Beverly Hills and West Hollywood, they feature probably the most attractive lines of bike clothes in town, from Castelli to Pearl Izumi to small boutique designers. (Hey, spandex doesn't have to be ugly.) Prices can be a little steep but not as much as car insurance. Featured lines include Independent Fabrication, Turner, Pinarello, and Hoffman BMX (among others). Both the staff and the mechanics are top-drawer. Moving east to Eagle Rock is my local favorite, **Budget Bikes.** It's a family-run place (ask for Oscar) and they also offer discounts for ALC riders. Good prices, a very good selection of parts, clothes (frequently on sale), and, best of all, a very LBS sensibility. In Pasadena, Le Tour freaks will delight in a visit to **Velo Pasadena.** The store is 5,000 square feet in size and is the major West Coast retailer for Time and Colnago. And if you're looking for a peloton to hook up with, ask here. They'll invite you to accompany one of their weekly rides. (Be prepared to get smoked on the hills.) Finally, if its mail-order prices you're seeking, head for the Santa Monica outlet of **Supergo,** supposedly the country's largest "cycling superstore" (whatever that means). They've got their own in-house brands of clothes, bars, stems, Ti pedals, saddles, wheel sets, whatever. You name it. If a knockoff exists, it's probably here with a Supergo tag on it.

The Index

Please see Map 13 on p. 146 for all Shopping listings.

Agent Provocateur (p. 163) MELROSE Refined raunch with an even racier price tag.... *Tel 323/653-0229. 7691 Melrose Ave. Mon–Sat 11am–7pm.*

American Apparel (p. 164) CITYWIDE Sweatshop-free, 100% cotton, famous for their boy shorts, unstructured underwear, and sexy ads. They've got 10 stores in L.A. but my favorites are in Echo Park and (for the boys) in West Hollywood.... *Echo Park: Tel 213/ 484-6464; www.americanapparel.net; 2111 W. Sunset Blvd.*

West Hollywood: Tel 310/659-0373; 802 N. San Vicente Blvd. Mon–Thurs 11am–10pm; Fri–Sat 11am–11pm; Sun 11am–8pm.

American Rag CIE **(p. 158)** MELROSE Fairly pricey vintage clothes from the outlet that started it all.... *Tel 323/935-3154. 150 S. La Brea Ave. Mon–Sat 10am–9pm; Sun noon–7pm.*

Amoeba Music **(p. 155)** HOLLYWOOD Whatever your music jones, it's got the fix—and great live performances.... *Tel 323/245-6400. www.amoebamusic.com. 6400 Sunset Blvd. Mon–Sat 10:30am–11pm; Sun 11am–9pm. No trade-in activity after 9pm.*

Anime Jungle **(p. 152)** LITTLE TOKYO Everything anime, big-eyed, bug-eyed, and slightly kinky, everything to satisfy your inner salaryman.... *Tel 213/621-1661. www.animejungle.net. 319 E. 2nd St., Suite 103. Mon, Wed–Fri noon–8pm; Sat–Sun 11am–8pm.*

Anzen Hardware **(p. 161)** LITTLE TOKYO This Little Tokyo landmark carries knives, tools, and other supersharp Japanese woodcarving implements.... *Tel 213/628-7600. 309 E. 1st St. Mon–Sat 9:30am–6pm; Sun 11am–4pm.*

Aron's Records **(p. 154)** HOLLYWOOD The *sine qua non* of indie record stores in Hollywood.... *Tel 323/469-4700. www.aronsrecords.com. 1150 N. Highland Ave. Sun–Thurs 10am–10pm; Fri–Sat 10am–midnight.*

Back Door Bakery **(p. 155)** SILVER LAKE Where just about everyone in Silver Lake comes for breakfast.... *Tel 323/662-7927. 1710 Silverlake Blvd. Daily 7am–6pm. Kitchen closes at 4pm.*

Bodhi Tree Bookstore **(p. 167)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Improving your spiritual life has never been easier or more confusing.... *Tel 310/659-1733. www.bodhitree.com. 8585 Melrose Ave. Daily 10am–11pm. Used-book section closes at 4pm.*

Book Soup **(p. 168)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Exhaustive assortment—you'll find it here or they'll find it for you.... *Tel 310/659-3110. www.booksoup.com. 8818 Sunset Blvd. Mon–Sat 9am–10pm; Sun 9am–8pm.*

Brand Books **(p. 155)** GLENDALE Used books in quality condition at bibliophile prices. A browser's heaven.... *Tel 818/507-5943. www.abebooks.com/home/brandbooks. 231 N. Brand Blvd. Mon–Thurs 10am–9pm; Fri–Sat 10am–10pm; Sun 10am–8pm.*

Budget Bikes **(p. 172)** EAGLE ROCK A great local bike store stocking bikes, parts, and accessories, plus good mechanics and fair prices on everything.... *Tel 323/254-4160. 2750 Colorado Blvd. Mon–Fri 9:30am–7pm; Sat 9am–6pm.*

Chulerias **(p. 162)** SILVER LAKE Artsy-crafty "nice little things" from all over the Pacific Rim, with a healthy dose of Frida Kahlo.... *Tel 323/665-9772. Sunset Junction at 3743 W. Sunset Blvd. Daily 10am–6pm.*

Claudia Laub **(p. 170)** MID-CITY High-quality letterpress paper printing and paper products.... *Tel 323/931-1710. www.claudialaubstudio.com. 7404 W. Beverly Blvd. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm.*

The Continental Shop **(p. 150)** SANTA MONICA Brits head to this far-flung English mecca for food from the homeland, British television DVDs and more.... *Tel 310/453-8655. 1619 Wilshire Blvd. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm; Sun noon–4pm.*

Decades, Decades Two **(p. 158)** MELROSE Used Donna Karan sundresses to Prada shoes. Everything is in good condition and affordable.... *Tel 323/655-1960. 8214 Melrose Ave. Mon–Sat 11:30am–6pm; Sun noon–5pm.*

Destroy All Music **(p. 167)** SILVER LAKE All punk, all the time, on CD and vinyl.... *Tel 323/663-9300. www.destroyallmusic.com. 3818 Sunset Blvd.*

Distant Lands Travel Bookstore & Outfitters **(p. 153)** PASADENA Travel books, accessories, backpacks, and maps.... *Tel 626/449-3220. www.distantlands.com. 56 S. Raymond Ave. Tues–Thurs 10am–7pm; Fri–Sat 10:30am–9pm; Sun–Mon 11am–6pm.*

E N **(p. 161)** SILVER LAKE Incense, furniture, toys, and vintage kimonos.... *Tel 323/660-0262. 2308 Hyperion Ave. Tues–Fri 12–6pm; Sat 11am–6pm; Sun 12–5pm.*

Every Picture Tells a Story **(p. 169)** SANTA MONICA Highbrow books to get your little ones from Dr. Seuss to Doogie Howser, M.D., in no time.... *Tel 310/451-2700. www.everypicture.com. 1318 Montana Ave. Mon–Sat 10am–7pm; Sun 11am–5pm.*

Fandango Salon **(p. 160)** SILVER LAKE Absolutely the best hair salon in Silver Lake, with curly hair specialists. Reservations strongly advised.... *Tel 323/663-6965. 1601 Griffith Park Blvd. Tues–Sat 10am–8pm.*

Garage Company **(p. 171)** CULVER CITY Like hogs to a trough, serious motorheads will love this major classic-motorcycle resource.... *Tel 310/821-1793. www.garagecompany.com. 11321 Washington Blvd. Tues–Fri 10am–6pm.*

Geographia Map and Travel Bookstore **(p. 153)** BURBANK A favorite travel-specific store, especially for maps.... *Tel 818/ 848-1414. 4000 Riverside Dr. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm.*

George C. Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits **(p. 166)** WILSHIRE DISTRICT Ideal for the dinosaur freak in your family.... *Tel 323/934-7243. www.tarpits.org. 5801 Wilshire Blvd. Mon–Fri 9:30am–5pm; Sat–Sun 10am–5pm.*

Ginza YA Bakery **(p. 155)** LITTLE TOKYO Perfect-looking pastries and cakes made to suit the Japanese taste. Curry-filled donut is a must.... *Tel 213/626-1904. 333 S. Alameda St., #106. Daily 7:30am–7pm.*

Glendale Certified Farmer's Market **(p. 154)** GLENDALE The location, on the sidewalks of too-busy Brand Boulevard, sucks. The selection, however, is fab—real peaches, organic everything, Asian rarities, and a few crafts sellers.... *On S. Brand Blvd. at Colorado Blvd. Thurs 9:30am–1:30pm.*

Golyester **(p. 158)** MID-CITY High-end vintage clothing with high-end prices and a vaguely snotty attitude to match.... *Tel 323/ 931-1339. 136 S. La Brea Ave. Daily 11am–6pm.*

Goodwill Industries **(p. 158)** HOLLYWOOD This isn't your father's Goodwill—it's new and brightly lit and the changing rooms don't smell.... *Tel 323/644-1517. 4575 Hollywood Blvd. Mon–Fri 9am–8pm; Sat 10am–7pm; Sun 10am–6pm.*

Govinda's International Imports **(p. 152)** CULVER CITY An Indian outpost where the karma is great, the ghee flows freely, and you can get all kinds of Indian textiles and accessories. You won't be sari.... *Tel 310/204-3263. 3764 Watseka Ave. Mon–Sat 11am–8:30pm; Sun noon–6:30pm.*

Grand Central Market **(p. 151)** DOWNTOWN You can't get closer to a Mexico City produce/fish market than this. Looking for freshly killed goat or a pig's head? You'll find it here.... *Tel 213/ 624-2378. 317 S. Broadway Ave. Daily 10am–6pm.*

Great Wall Books & Art **(p. 152)** CHINATOWN This is a major outlet for Sinologists, where you come for your Cantonese language tapes, Chinese history, and the definitive word on the Party line. It's not camp—yet. Invest now.... *Tel 213/617-2817. 970 N. Broadway Ave. Daily 9:30am–7pm.*

A Grocery Warehouse **(p. 151)** ECHO PARK Tiny aisles but the best fresh fish and Asian tropical produce at great prices anywhere.... *Tel 213/482-4803. 1487 Sunset Blvd. Daily 9am–9pm.*

Gypsy **(p. 159)** SILVER LAKE Want to pretend you went to Bali and had room in your luggage for a startlingly ugly Ganesh mask?... *Tel 323/660-2556. 3915 W. Sunset Blvd. Mon–Wed noon–8pm; Thurs–Sat 10am–9:30am.*

Han Cholo **(p. 162)** ECHO PARK Skate-rat/gang/wiseguy wannabes shop here for bling, T's, hoodies, and attitude. Snoop and Brad Pitt both have sported their jewelry.... *Tel 213/482-9180. 1549 Echo Park Ave. Wed–Sat noon–6pm.*

Helen's Cycles **(p. 171)** SANTA MONICA They have five outlets locally but this store is the mother ship. Amateurs and pros alike come here for all the big names: Trek, Cannondale (even tandems!), Quintana Roo, and more.... *Tel 310/829-1836. 2501 Broadway. Mon–Fri 10am–7pm; Sat 9am–6pm; Sun 10am–5pm.*

Hennessey & Ingalls **(p. 168)** SANTA MONICA Art and architecture books for everyone from the professorial level on down.... *Tel 310/458-9074. 1254 Third St. Promenade. Daily 10am–8pm.*

Hollywood Farmer's Market **(p. 153)** WEST HOLLYWOOD This is the closest thing we have to an all-year food theme park. Nuts, sausages, beer, barbecue, tacos, crêpes, burgers, doughnuts. Oh, and farmer's produce as well. I think.... *Tel 323/933-9211. 6333 W. 3rd St. Mon–Fri 9am–9pm; Sat 9am–8pm; Sun 10am–8pm.*

Hustler Hollywood **(p. 171)** WEST HOLLYWOOD The World According to Larry Flynt. Dildos, dykes on bikes, butt plugs, horny housewives, crotchless panties, lubricants, dirty pictures, dirty movies.... *Tel 310/860-9009. 8920 Sunset Blvd. Retail store daily 10am–2am; cafe daily 8am–2am.*

Illiterature Bookstore/Pulp **(p. 169/170)** BEVERLY HILLS This is a great local bookstore/magazine outlet, especially for If'n-brand materials to make your own magnum opus. It carries lots of local small-press output.... *Tel 323/937-3505. 452 S. La Brea Ave. Mon–Fri 10am–8pm; Sat 10am–7:30pm; Sun 10am–6pm.*

I. Martin **(p. 171)** BEVERLY HILLS A very well-stocked, slightly pricey bike store. A hefty selection of everything from the latest Le Tour models to BMX butt busters. Road weenies in WeHo flock here.... *Tel 323/653-6900. Mon–Fri 10am–7pm; Sat 10am–6pm; Sun 11am–6pm.*

In House **(p. 157)** MID-CITY Extraordinarily inventive and attractive handmade furniture by local artists.... *Tel 323/931-4420. 7370 W. Beverly Blvd.*

Japanese American National Museum Store **(p. 166)** LITTLE TOKYO Books and videos about the issei experience, as well as tea sets and some clothes.... *Tel 213/625-0414. 369 E. 1st St. Tues–Wed, Fri–Sun 10am–5pm; Thurs 10am–8pm.*

Kicks **(p. 166)** SILVER LAKE Sneakers, sneakers, sneakers. That's it.... *Tel 323/644-1272. 3938 W. Sunset Blvd. Tues–Sun noon–8pm.*

The Kids Are Alright **(p. 162)** ECHO PARK Local designers clothes that you will never wear to your boring corporate secretarial job. Oddities, form-fitting, animal jewelry, all displayed in a Little Red School House chaos—exactly the sensibility of the Who anthem.... *Tel 213/413-4014. 2201 W. Sunset Blvd. Mon–Sat noon–7pm; Sun noon–5pm.*

Kinokuniya **(p. 152)** LITTLE TOKYO Japanese magazines, books, language tapes, kanji workbooks, culture, history, and pure garbage—whatever you want.... *Tel 213/687-4480. 123 Astronaut Ellison S. Onizuka Way, #205. Daily 10am–8pm.*

Little Tokyo Square **(p. 150)** LITTLE TOKYO This two-story mall in Little Tokyo is a one-stop shopping source for anything Japanese.... *Tel 213/687-6699. 333 S. Alameda St. Daily 9:30am–8pm.*

Luxe de Ville **(p. 163)** ECHO PARK New and vintage, a stylist's dream. Lots of old-now-ironic rock Ts, dead stock, weird things to wear that are just about to become the new edgy look.... *Tel 213/353-0135. 2157 W. Sunset Blvd. Mon–Sat noon–7pm; Sun noon–5pm.*

Matty's **(p. 160)** MID-CITY Get your Playboy or Brazilian at a great price. What's a few seconds of pain for 6 weeks of smooth?... *Tel 323/651-2180. 8202 W. 3rd St. Tues–Sat 9:30am–6pm.*

Michael R. Thompson Books **(p. 168)** MID-CITY This rare-book seller specializes in Western philosophy, but that doesn't really describe the variety of dusty old books you'll find.... *Tel 323/658-1901. 8312 W. 3rd St. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm.*

MOCA Gift Store **(p. 166)** DOWNTOWN It ain't cheap, but it has things you won't find anywhere else.... *Tel 213/621-2766. 250 S. Grand Ave. Mon–Fri 9am–5:30pm.*

Modernica **(p. 156)** FAIRFAX Midcentury furniture madness writ large. Tons and tons of pieces from the '50s on.... *Tel 323/933-0383. www.modernica.net. 7366 Beverly Blvd. Mon–Fri 10am–6pm; Sat 11am–6pm.*

Nahui Ohlin **(p. 162)** ECHO PARK A Chicano/Brown Power one-stop shop that manages to subvert with a sense of humor. Mainly T-shirts and buttons, stickers, books, jewelry.... *Tel 213/202-6550. 1511 W. Sunset Blvd. Mon–Sat noon–8pm; Sun noon–6pm.*

Necromance **(p. 159)** MELROSE It's Halloween year-round at this creepy little boneyard.... *Tel 323/934-8684. 7220 Melrose Ave. Mon–Sat noon–7pm; Sun 1–6pm.*

OK **(p. 156)** MID-CITY For midcentury glassware and a huge selection of books about it, this is the place.... *Tel 323/653-3501. 8303 W. 3rd St. Mon–Sat 11am–6:30pm; Sun noon–6pm.*

Out of the Closet **(p. 165)** WEST HOLLYWOOD If you're in the market for stylish used clothes, you can find real designer gems here.... *Tel 323/934-1956. 360 N. Fairfax Ave. Mon–Sat noon–7pm; Sun noon–6pm.*

Ozzie Dots **(p. 165)** SILVER LAKE The source for dressing up in Mommy's gown and pearls.... *Tel 323/663-2867. 4637 Hollywood Blvd. Mon–Sat noon–7pm; Sun 9:30am–6pm.*

Pasadena City College Flea Market **(p. 150)** PASADENA One of the best swap meets in the city because it's not too huge, the prices are reasonable, and it's free.... *Tel 626/585-7123. 1570 E. Colorado Blvd. 1st Sun of the month, starting at 8am.*

Peron Antiques and Collectibles **(p. 165)** ECHO PARK Don't be fooled by the low-key location and vaguely junk-store appearance. This is a major source for Hollywood set dressers. Mainly pre-1940 material, kitchenware, Taxco jewelry, oddball kitsch.... *Tel 213/413-7051. 2213 W. Sunset Blvd. Daily noon–6pm.*

Pink Cheeks **(p. 160)** SHERMAN OAKS A face-lift for your privates to take you back before puberty.... *Tel 818/906-8225. 14562 Van Nuys Blvd. Tues–Thurs 7am–whenever; Fri–Sat 6:30am–whenever and by appointment.*

Polkadots and Moonbeams **(p. 164)** FAIRFAX Zillions of hair accessories, bags, and new and old clothes at really reasonable prices.... *Tel 323/651-1746. 8367 W. 3rd St. Mon–Sat 11am–7pm; Sun 11am–5pm.*

Pull My Daisy **(p. 163)** SILVER LAKE Hipsters' clothing without attitude and a focus on local designers.... *Tel 323/663-0608. 3908 Sunset Blvd. Mon–Sat 11am–7pm; Sun 10am–6pm.*

Puzzle Zoo **(p. 170)** SANTA MONICA Light sabers, monster masks, horror cult paraphernalia for people with way too much money and maybe too much free time.... *Tel 310/393-9201. 1413 Third St. Promenade. Sun–Thurs 10am–10pm; Fri–Sat 10am–midnight.*

Rafu Bussan (p. 161) LITTLE TOKYO This shop offers great prices for Japanese household ceramics.... *Tel 213/614-1181. 326 E. 2nd St. Thurs–Mon 10:30am–6pm.*

Remix (p. 165) FAIRFAX Absolutely stunning new/old ’20s–’70s shoes you’ll want to frame, not wear.... *Tel 323/936-6210. 7605 W. Beverly Blvd. Mon–Sat noon–7pm; Sun noon–6pm.*

Rhino Records (p. 154) WESTWOOD Rhino is the music geek in high school who relentlessly collected weird vinyl.... *Tel 310/474-3786. 1720 Westwood Blvd. Mon–Sat 10am–10pm; Sun 11am–8pm.*

Right Choice Caribbean and African Market (p. 151) MID-CITY A highly satisfying one-stop outlet for cooking everything Caribbean.... *Tel 323/292-8921. 4233 Crenshaw Blvd. Mon–Fri 9am–8pm; Sat 9am–9pm; Sun 9:30am–5:30pm.*

Rockaway Records (p. 167) SILVER LAKE Used CDs and rare vinyl, new alternative and L.A.-based product, ’60s memorabilia, and videos. Plus it sells tickets for Spaceland shows.... *Tel 323/664-3232. 2395 Glendale Blvd. Mon–Thurs 11am–8:30pm; Fri–Sat 11am–9pm; Sun 11am–8pm.*

Rose Bowl Flea Market (p. 150) PASADENA This is the original thing, a magnet for junk-store junkies from around the world.... *Tel. 626/560-7469. 1001 Rose Bowl Dr. 2nd Sun of every month, starting at 6am.*

Rubbish (p. 156) SILVER LAKE This is where to find your old, your tired, your waiting-to-be-refurbished furniture.... *Tel 323/661-5575. 1627 Silverlake Blvd. Daily noon–6pm.*

RumerB (p. 165) ECHO PARK Antiques, funky wall hangings, garden pots of every shape and size, plus lots more to clutter up your life and apartment.... *Tel 213/413-6230. 2209 W. Sunset Blvd. Tues–Sat 11:30am–5:30pm.*

Saint Vincent De Paul’s (p. 157) MID-CITY The place to come when you’re looking for a used piano or desk. Plus clothes.... *Tel 323/224-6280. 210 N. 21st St. Mon–Sat 9:30am–5:45pm; Sun 9:30am–4:45pm.*

Samuel French Theatre & Film Bookstore (p. 168) HOLLYWOOD Used scripts, used dreams, posters, celebrity iconography. This is a major Hollywood landmark.... *Tel 323/876-0570. 7623 Sunset Blvd. Mon–Fri 10am–6pm; Sat 10am–5pm.*

Santa Monica Farmer's Markets (p. 153) SANTA MONICA For chefs and home cooks who fancy the freshest and cheapest produce in season.... *Tel 310/458-8712. Arizona and 2nd sts. Wed 9am–2pm; Sat 8:30am–1pm. Also a Latin-accented farmer's market: Tel 310/458-8712; Pico Blvd. and Cloverfield Ave.; Sat 8am–1pm.*

Sea Level Records (p. 167) ECHO PARK A smallish record store with a very indie attitude. If you're looking to plug into the vibe that spawned Eastside sounds, from Beck to the Eels, pop in here.... *Tel 213/989-0146. 1716 W. Sunset Blvd. Mon–Sat noon–9pm; Sun noon–7pm.*

Shelter (p. 157) FAIRFAX Midcentury-style reproductions.... *Tel 323/937-3222. 7920 W. Beverly Blvd. Mon–Sat 11am–7pm; Sun noon–5pm.*

Show Pony (p. 162) ECHO PARK Handmade vintage and new clothes by local designers. Pricey, unique, frilly, artsy, and favored by name actors and rock musicians.... *Tel 213/482-7676. 1543 Echo Park Ave. Wed–Sat 1–7pm; Sun 1–6pm or by appointment.*

Silver Lake Farmer's Market (p. 154) SILVER LAKE Tiny in comparison to other farmer's markets in L.A., it doesn't have the variety and selection of other markets but it also doesn't have the crowds.... *3700 block of Sunset Blvd. Sat 8:30am–1pm.*

Skeletons in the Closet (p. 159) DOWNTOWN A gift shop at the county morgue? You need a well-established sense of black humor to get some of the macabre merchandise here.... *Tel 323/343-0760. 1140 N. Mission Rd., Los Angeles County Department of the Coroner, 2nd floor. Mon–Fri 8:30am–4:30pm.*

S.K. Uyeda Department Store (p. 160) LITTLE TOKYO Really good prices on kimonos, futons and accessories, and Japanese footwear.... *Tel 213/624-4790. 230 E. 1st St. Daily 8:30am–5:30pm.*

Skylight Books (p. 156) LOS FELIZ The Eastside's leader in hosting literary events.... *Tel 323/660-1175. 1818 N. Vermont Ave. Daily 10am–10pm.*

Soap Plant (p. 159) LOS FELIZ Combination gift store, bookstore, and crafts store, with loads of pop culture items from all over the world.... *Tel 323/663-0122. 4633 Hollywood Blvd. Mon–Wed 11am–7pm; Thurs–Sat 11am–9pm; Sun noon–6pm.*

Squaresville **(p. 165)** LOS FELIZ Deep racks of vintage gear, mainly for the female clotheshorse.... *Tel 323/669-8464. 1800 N. Vermont Ave. Sun–Mon noon–7pm; Tues–Sat 11am–8pm.*

Storyopolis **(p. 169)** WEST HOLLYWOOD A children's bookstore with very high-quality, "fine art" kids' books.... *Tel 310/358-2500. 116 N. Robertson Blvd. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm; Sun 11am–4pm.*

Supergo **(p. 172)** SANTA MONICA Cut-rate deals on bikes, knock-offs, closeouts. A good place to come for the essentials like tubes, computers, gloves, or if you're building up your own bike on a budget.... *Tel 310/451-9977. 501 Broadway. Mon–Wed 10am–7pm; Thurs–Fri 10am–8pm; Sat 9am–6pm; Sun 9am–5pm.*

Taschen Store **(p. 169)** BEVERLY HILLS An illustrator or graphic artists' must-visit. Small but subversive. Don't be fooled by the location. You'll find something very weird, disturbing, hypnotic, or erotic within.... *Tel 310/274-4300. 354 N. Beverly Dr. Mon–Sat 10am–8pm; Sun 11am–6pm.*

Thailand Plaza **(p. 151)** HOLLYWOOD Fish sauces, curry pastes, fresh and dried noodles, and so forth.... *Tel 323/993-9000. 5321 Hollywood Blvd. Daily 9am–9pm.*

Trashy Lingerie **(p. 163)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Ohhh...really nasty undies, and I mean really nasty.... *Tel 310/652-4543. 402 N. La Cienega Blvd. Mon–Sat 10am–7pm.*

Traveler's Bookcase **(p. 153)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Maps, travel guides, and a very good remaindered selection.... *Tel 323/655-0575. 8375 W. 3rd St. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm; Sun 11am–5pm.*

Uncle Jer's **(p. 161)** SILVER LAKE All manner of weird must-have dust collectors and clothes.... *Tel 323/662-6710. 4459 W. Sunset Blvd. Mon–Sat 11am–7pm; Sun noon–6pm.*

Upon Shop **(p. 166)** SILVER LAKE Your one-stop shop for rare vintage vinyl and hip-hop karaoke in an ultrachill atmosphere.... *Tel 323/667-2011. 3910 W. Sunset Blvd. Sun–Wed noon–6pm; Thurs–Sat noon–8pm.*

Velo Pasadena **(p. 172)** PASADENA A warehouse of quality bikes, gear, clothes. Every new bike comes with 2 years of free maintenance.... *Tel 626/304-0064. 2562 Colorado Blvd. Mon–Fri 10am–7pm; Sat 9:30am–5pm; Sun 11am–5pm.*

Vinyl Fetish **(p. 166)** HOLLYWOOD One of the best vinyl outlets in L.A. is now supersized, offering sonic perversions of all persuasions, Goth to punk to techno.... *Tel 323/957-2290. 1613 Cahuenga Blvd. Daily noon–9pm.*

Vroman's Bookstore **(p. 155)** PASADENA This major literary landmark makes it worthwhile to drive to Pasadena. An enormous selection, loads of browsing space, and nearly daily readings, discussions, and book signings from bestselling authors.... *Colorado Blvd.: Tel 626/449-5320; 695 E. Colorado Blvd. Hastings Ranch location: Tel 626/351-0828; 3729 E. Foothill Blvd. Mon–Sat 9:30am–9pm; Sun 10am–7pm.*

Wanna Buy a Watch? **(p. 164)** MELROSE Totally refurbished Swingers-era Timex, Rolex, you name it. Not cheap, but you'll never find a better or longer-lasting accessory.... *Tel 323/653-0467. 7366 Melrose Ave. Tues–Sat 11am–6pm.*

Wasteland **(p. 165)** MELROSE/SANTA MONICA Best vintage clothes in town, according to rag pickers of note. Mind-bogglingly large selection. Two outlets available for your greasy fingers. *Melrose: Tel 323/653-3028; 7428 Melrose Ave. Santa Monica: Tel 310/395-2620; 1338 4th St. Mon–Sat 11am–8pm; Sun noon–7pm.*

Y Que **(p. 159)** LOS FELIZ George Jones cat food, World War II underwear, 7-day prayer candles. Cheap prices and a wonderful vibe.... *Tel 323/664-0021. 1770 N. Vermont Ave. Mon–Thurs 11am–8pm; Sat–Sun 11am–midnight.*

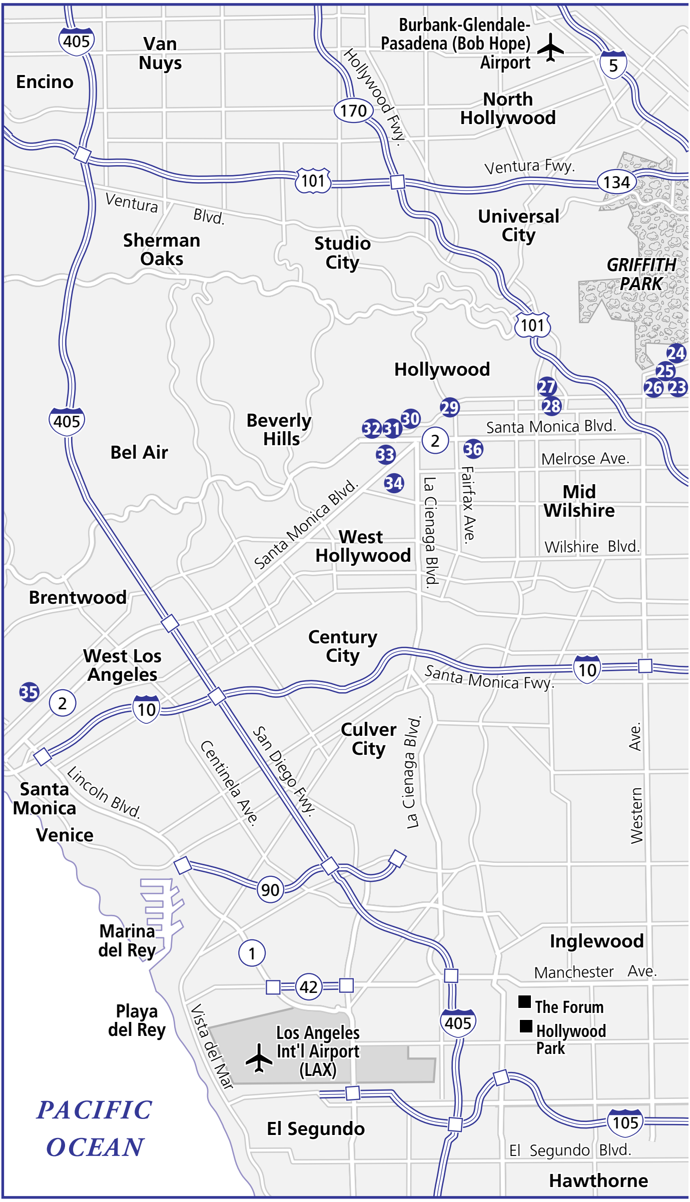
Zipper **(p. 157)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Furniture, crocheted bean-bag chairs, stools filled with polyurethane foam, paper star lights, cute weird knickknacks, pricey watches, travel clocks, plastic nuns.... *Tel 323/951-9190. 8316 W. 3rd St. Mon–Sat 11am–7pm; Sun noon–5pm.*

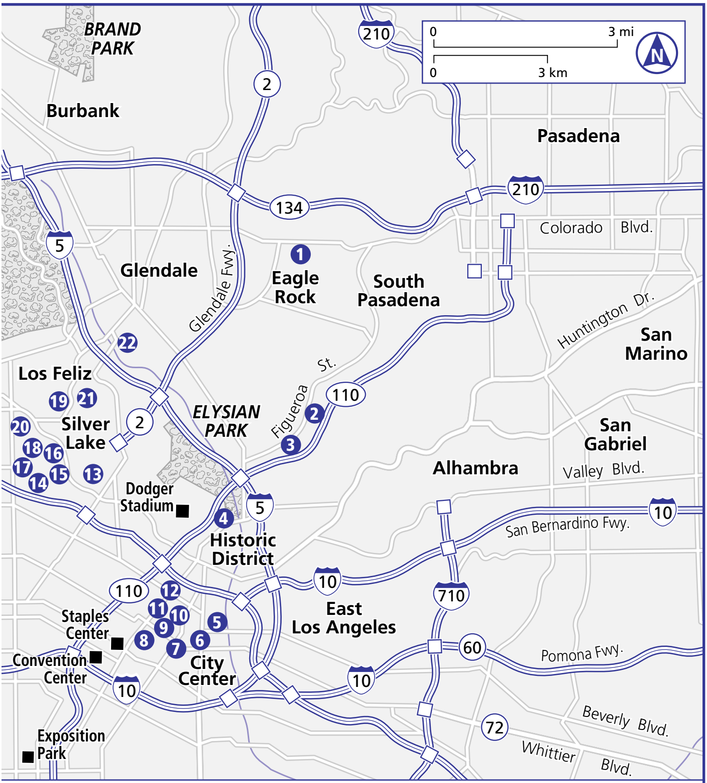
NIGH

TLIFE

6

Map 14: Los Angeles Nightlife


Encino
Van Nuys
405
Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena (Bob Hope) Airport
5
170
Hollywood Fwy.
North Hollywood
Ventura Fwy.
101
134
Ventura Blvd.
Sherman Oaks
Studio City
Universal City
GRIFFITH PARK
101
24
25
26
23
Hollywood
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
36
2
Santa Monica Blvd.
Melrose Ave.
Beverly Hills
Bel Air
405
Mid Wilshire
Wilshire Blvd.
Santa Monica Blvd.
West Hollywood
La Cienaga Blvd.
Fairfax Ave.
Brentwood
Century City
West Los Angeles
35
2
10
Santa Monica Fwy.
10
Culver City
La Cienaga Blvd.
Western Ave.
Centinela Ave.
San Diego Fwy.
Lincoln Blvd.
Santa Monica
Venice
90
Marina del Rey
1
Inglewood
Manchester Ave.
42
The Forum
Hollywood Park
Playa del Rey
Vista del Mar
Los Angeles Int'l Airport (LAX)
405
105
PACIFIC OCEAN
El Segundo
El Segundo Blvd.
Hawthorne


BRAND PARK
Burbank
0
3 mi
0
3 km
N
Pasadena
210
2
134
Colorado Blvd.
5
Glendale
Glendale Fwy.
1
Eagle Rock
South Pasadena
Huntington Dr.
San Marino
22
Los Feliz
St.
Figueroa
110
19
21
20
Silver Lake
2
ELYSIAN PARK
2
3
San Gabriel
18
16
17
15
13
14
Alhambra
Valley Blvd.
Dodger Stadium
4
5
Historic District
San Bernardino Fwy.
10
110
12
11
10
9
5
8
6
7
Staples Center
Convention Center
City Center
10
East Los Angeles
710
60
Pomona Fwy.
10
72
Beverly Blvd.
Whittier Blvd.
Exposition Park

The Abbey **34**
Akbar **19**
Bigfoot Lodge **22**
Blu Monkey Lounge **26**
Burgundy Room **28**
The Chalet **1**
Chateau Marmont **29**
Cheetah's **20**
Cole's Pacific Electric Buffet **7**
The Echo **14**
Footsie's **3**
Frolic Room **27**
Golden Gopher **6**
Good Luck Bar **19**
Grand Avenue Sports Bar **12**
Hank's Bar **8**
Jumbo's Clown Room **23**
Little Cave **2**
The Little Joy **15**
Little Pedro's Blue Bongo **5**
The Mountain Bar **4**

Oiwake **9**
The Parlour Club **36**
Polo Lounge **32**
The Room **28**
The Roost **19**
The Roxy Theatre **31**
The Shortstop **13**
Silverlake Lounge **16**
Smog Cutter **17**
Spaceland **21**
The Spotlight **28**
Standard Bar Downtown **10**
The Study **24**
The Sunset Room **28**
Temple Bar **18**
Tiki Ti **19**
Troubadour **33**
Veranda Bar **11**
Vine Street Lounge **25**
Whisky a Go Go **30**
Zanzibar **35**

Basic Stuff

Angelenos don't have to take their nightlife seriously, for the simple reason that clubs, bars, and hangouts are merely an alternative to inviting a few friends over to have a Q on the deck while you watch the sun dropping behind the Santa Monicas. Going out in L.A. should be *fun*—not simply a way to see friends without bringing them back to your squalid sixth-floor walk-up. The velvet-rope snobbery that fuels hype in other places doesn't really work here. Once a nightspot starts to show attitude, that's when the true night crawlers know it's time to move on to the next undiscovered dive. Attitude is the province of the audience, not the doormen.

Thanks to the all-inclusive state ban on indoor smoking in 1998, there has recently been a boom in dining/drinking alfresco, a move from the bar stool to the patio, from the window booth to the sidewalk. In Santa Monica now you can't even smoke in the city parks except in designated areas. Although fines can be as much as $500 for repeat offenders, there are only two inspectors and more than 3,000 bars, so your chances of getting away with a puff are pretty good—but why risk the wrath of your fellow patrons when here are so many nice outdoor spaces to feed the addiction?

Like any celebrity career, a nightclub has a lifespan that depends on who's been inside it. The guest list is only a formality—everybody knows it's all about who you know who can get you in—unless, of course, you're already one of the beautiful people. And as everybody knows, save the naïve or arrogant, just because your name's on the list doesn't guarantee you welcome access with a smile and subtle ass kiss. The promoter holds the keys to this kingdom and unless you look the look and walk the walk, plan on finding somewhere else to go—for now. Once the A-listers move on and the promoters open the floodgates to let almost anybody in, the scene is labeled "B" and like magic, the crowds become more diverse, the lines outside begin to diminish, and the list disappears.

And because we live in a city where everything eventually winds up in a movie or on TV, compressed, homogenized, and somehow neutered in the process, we savor our pockets of reality all the more. The mosh pit was invented here: Slam dancing is the product of overstimulated South Coast teenage boys working out a mixture of anger, fear, boredom—basically too many monkeys cavorting in too small a cage. That's not to say that Angelenos don't drift into pretentiousness and unintentional self-parody from time to time. The nature of nightlife is ephemeral, and scenes ebb and flow along with the mass culture, pushed and pulled by capitalism and the Hollywood sausage grinder. After all, perfection means there are no surprises. When you're roaming the streets at night, hoping you won't get pulled over for a DUI, you *want* the unexpected. Sweaty, stinking of stale beer and cigarettes, with just enough cash for a couple more drinks, you just *know* that the next club is where you'll get lucky and lose all sense of self. And that's what it's all about, isn't it? ***Note:*** Unless noted otherwise, everything closes at 2am.

The Lowdown

The A list... Some of the hippest places in Los Angeles are the ones where an unmarked door replaces the red rope and a blaring lighted sign that helps to explain why you're drinking an $18 mixed drink. **The Echo** in Echo Park is one place where the hipness comes with anonymity. Sure the interior is dark and dirty, and the bathrooms could rival some of the more colorful and fragrant gas stations in south L.A., but there's something about the strong drinks, mediocre '90s music mixed with new beats, and an artsy crowd who seems to have popped out of the womb wearing black diapers (hey, some of them still might—it's all about the art) that makes this place the coolest spot to be everything you are, and nothing you're not. It's not exactly "alternative," not exactly a club, and not exactly a dive. The Echo defies definition by staying beneath the radar, keeping the NAYARIT sign outside—a leftover from its days as a Mexican nightclub. (Just look for a crowd of scruffy kids smoking on the sidewalk.) Maybe they're on to something—it could just be the best way to keep the commercial out of the underground. "Hang the DJs" and the Wednesday night Dub Club are both worth checking out. Outside of its sister-club Spaceland, The Echo is the most cutting-edge live music and DJ scene on the Eastside. **The Parlour Club,** on the edge of WeHo, is the kind of place that is popular among both veteran clubbers and the newly 21. Almost any night is interesting, but my favorite is Bricktops on Friday, when Dr. Vaginal Davis re-creates the sensibility of 1920s Paris and Weimar Berlin. People drive up from Orange County just for this night. Despite its popularity, the Parlour succeeds without a trace of attitude or gay-only exclusivity. The stage is tiny so it's not the best place to see live music, but the dingy couch-filled back room is the perfect place to get up-close-and-personal with some stranger. Finally, out in Santa Monica, **Zanzibar** rates a mention as a major draw for all So Cal DJs who want to see spin meisters in action. KCRW-FM DJs Jason Bentley and Garth Trinidad are two high-profile regulars you can expect to see, but periodically there will be other nationally known turntable artists in action here also. House, breaks, dub, future soul, Afro beat, progressive, trance.

Downtown gutter crawl... Why bother with the Standard and that snotty attitude? You want to get loaded and rub elbows with the real people, you should start with **Cole's Pacific Electric Buffet.** It's nearly 100 years old, was a former speakeasy, claims to have invented the French Dip sandwich (see Philippe's on p. 86), and has Chimay and Spaten on tap. It's almost subterranean, both in location and mood. Good bartenders, okay prices, and a great Skid Row location. Stumble out drunk from here and nobody on the street will notice a thing. Down at the edge of Little Tokyo is **Little Pedro's Blue Bongo,** notable for its blue Moorish roof and its cop-bar/brothel history. It recently changed hands and is now morphed into a fairly happening place for Echo Park bands to play (interspersed between mariachi and Latin bands). They still have decent Mexican food but people now are coming for the Blue Bongo bar and the live music and DJs. If you come after a Dodgers game, keep your ticket stub—they'll knock a buck off each drink. Over in Chinatown, artist Jorge Prado's contribution to the local scene is **The Mountain Bar.** Beautifully designed (if your tastes run to red, red, and red) and with an upstairs lounge, it's a combination bar-cultural arena, complete with poetry slams, Goddard films, and a wonderful vanilla-sake martini. Good place to complain to yourself about your cheating agent; bad place to take a date you actually want to converse with.

So-last-year bars... The **Good Luck Bar** continues to pack in a clientele of slumming Westsiders, rubes from the Valley, and the occasional local who's too lazy to walk across the street to Akbar. When it finally goes out of business, sacrificed to the next trend, no one will care. The place is beautiful and cozy inside, all done up like a Hong Kong whore with red lanterns hanging like pasties over the red roll-and-tuck booths. But it has no sense of where it is—perched on a busy Sunset Boulevard intersection, in a limbo netherworld between East Hollywood, Los Feliz, and Silver Lake. This bar feels more like a movie set than a place to drown your sorrows, and the people who do drink here spend way too much time checking themselves out in the mirror. Good very stiff drinks, however, if you've got the money and the need. Downtown, the **Golden Gopher** has become a similar must-visit for the corporate drones who have moved into the nearby gentrified lofts and needed a gritty place to take their dates after a game at Staples. It's got dim lights, a smoking patio, a decent jukebox, and a delightfully crackhead-infested Skid Row address. Formerly a dive bar, the former speakeasy was taken over by the Hollywood folks behind the Three Clubs and Liquid Kitty and now has been redone to make it yuppie-safe: couches, gopher-themed lamps, single malts, retro video games, wretched Vegas decor that fails at the intended irony. Its sole redeeming quality is an ancient grandfathered liquor license that allows it to sell booze by the bottle for takeout. The **Temple Bar** is where the late lamented Garage used to be. The place has been made safe for slumming Westsiders, but the faux Chinese decor—rock gardens, votive candles, bamboo—just doesn't float my boat. The soundtrack is decent with house, trance, and a touch of global funk 'n' soul, but I liked the stinky DIY feel of the Garage.

Noise makers... On a particularly inner-city slice of Sunset Boulevard, you'll find the **Silverlake Lounge,** the latest dive bar discovered by the alt/punk gutter crawlers of Silver Lake/Echo Park. It was strictly a neighborhood gay

TIKI TI

There is no need to say another word. Bars may come and bars may go, but the ***Tiki Ti*** *will outlive us all. Small as a closet, with only a handful of tables and stools, this is one of L.A.'s best-known oddities. The interior is a hallucination of neon, skulls, sparkling waterfalls, and other eye candy that fascinates at first but then after your second drink makes you a bit nauseous. You can choose from among more than 40 tropical drinks, all formulated with one purpose in mind: to knock you on your butt while concealing the taste of the alcohol. It's one of the few well-known nighttime icons where the tourists and locals blend easily, and makes for a great first date spot, as evidenced by the high ratio of couples here.*

Latino haunt, with its biggest attraction being weekend drag shows, until the Fold promoters took over Tuesday to Thursday nights; now you see club kids spilled out on the sidewalk, smoking in between sets of punishing punk and alt-noise whatever bands, a Not-Quite-Ready-for-Spaceland crew. There's a nice wooden bar, lava lamps, and when the talent is out on the sidewalk having a smoke, the vibe is completely soothing. Then there's **Spaceland,** probably the most influential alt club in L.A., a place to see whatever is new, uncensored, and probably unsigned. This is a low-maintenance place, with zero attitude, moderately priced drinks, and a glassed-in smoking section with a bar and view of the stage. The regulars are mainly Silver Lake locals, musicians, and artists. And typically, there's no obvious name outside, just a battered sign that says L.A. DREAMS, a leftover from when this was a disco. Located in the Japanese Village Plaza mall between 1st and 2nd streets in Little Tokyo, **Oiwake** is the oldest karaoke venue in L.A. It's a full-on restaurant with all the Sapporo and sake you can handle. The *nomiya* (drinking food) is passable but really you come here for the scene, not the cuisine. It's where normal people suddenly can't resist playing out some inner fantasy of *American Idol* to a roomful of drunken strangers. You can humiliate yourself in English, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, and Filipino. Friday nights are the most raucous. Sundays are when professionals from the nearby East West Players theater stop in.

Hotel bars... In case you haven't heard, hotel bars are not just for hotel guests anymore. If you're trolling for some uncomplicated romance, this is where you're most likely to meet someone of like mind. Be warned, however: You'll be paying through the nose for the opportunity. The cheapest domestic beer at any of the spots listed below is $4.50. The queen of all hotel bars has to be the **Polo Lounge** at the Beverly Hills Hotel. The decor is classic pink and green, and the landscaping is fabulous. During the week its clientele is mainly 90210 fat cats who come here after work to schmooze 'n' booze. There's always a piano player tinkling standards, and even on weekends the place is jammed. This is one of the entertainment industry's major deal-making venues, and the possibility of seeing a famous face is always good here. Over off the Sunset Strip, you may not be able to get into the butterfly-encrusted Bar Marmont, so amble next door to the **Chateau Marmont** hotel itself and sit outside on the patio. The feeling here is far more relaxed and pleasant than at most hotel bars. Despite all the hype, the atmosphere is charmingly old Hollywood, slightly down-at-the-heels but comfortable enough not to take itself too seriously. The only agents you'll find are those haranguing their writer-clients to get the goddamn rewrite finished already. The moneymaking machinery of Hollywood seems a million miles away from this place. If you see any celebs, leave them alone—that's why they come here. The **Standard Bar Downtown** has one of the trendiest bar scenes going from Thursday through Sunday, with all of the flair and attitude of the original Sunset Strip location. Anyone can pay $20 to jump upstairs to the rooftop from 5pm on (poolside happy hours are so swank), unless, of course, there's a private after-hours bash—just look for the rooftop manager, who goes simply by the moniker "T" (stands for Trendy? Tired? Twenty bucks, please?). You can also get into upstairs heaven by checking into a room or get in with some of the better-looking people on their way up the escalator. There are three key places to drink besides the rooftop: the enclosed bar area, the outdoor patio, and the large lobby where circular couches are great chill spots and meeting-strangers zones. The combination of the top-shelf alcohol, dim colored lighting, and blaring house music makes everybody seem a little more hip, a little more beautiful, a little more than the L.A. standard scene. Yes it's *très* snotty and faux-urban, but if you're on an expense account and desperately need to impress some clueless client, come here. Those who work Downtown eschew the Standard for the much more pleasant and real scene at the **Veranda Bar** at the Figueroa Hotel. It's a poolside bar and is wonderfully adorned with bougainvillea and cactus. Looking for something a bit more noir? Stop by **Hank's Bar** at the Stilwell Hotel. The jukebox is packed with old C & W and the antiquated popcorn machine in the corner, lurking like some retro C3PO, is the only witness to how low you've come. Raymond Chandler supposedly hung out here, searching for inspiration or oblivion—whichever came first—but that's probably true of every bar in Downtown. Finally, for the hard-core sports junkie with major ADD, stop by the **Grand Avenue Sports Bar** inside the Millennium Biltmore Hotel. It's got loads of informal gambling, free popcorn, way stupid drink names, and 17 television screens, not one of them tuned to C-SPAN.

Where the real swingers have moved on to... **The Roost** is a bar from the old school: There's a terrible jukebox, two TVs running with the sound off, lots of smokers, free popcorn, and red-leather tuck-and-roll booths. It has a kitchen, but most people come for the bar. It's like a scaled-down version of the Dresden Room with a more Valley suburban feel, right next to the L.A. River. The drinks are kick-ass and cheap ($2 for a beer), and the mood is nice and mellow. **The Shortstop** used to be *the* cop bar in Echo Park, and much police regalia remains, although the place has been gentrified along with other pockets of EP. The baseball connection—it's just down the street from the entrance to Dodger Stadium. But clearly this isn't your dad's cop bar anymore. The pinball game is a *South Park* version ("Man, you suck," says Cartman when your paddle misses the ball). The interior is all wood, like some Midwestern rec room; there's a black-and-white-photo booth (four pix for $4), which is hyped out front; there are displays of cop badges and patches from all over—the Bahamas to Darien, Georgia; and there are roll-and-tuck booths and a DANCING IZ EVIL sign over the main lounge area. Fifties tube lamps light a large poster of "the Shortstop" from writer Zane Grey's novel of the same name. It hangs next to a *Choirboys* movie poster. For about 15 minutes, this was "the hippest bar in LA," according to a clueless N.Y. travel writer, but that rep has vanished and now it's reverted to what it always was—and always will be: an alky's hang for locals—but with nicer furnishings; and no matter how they change the decor, it's still hard to erase years of cop vibe. The jukebox is hip—old-school rap and funk, a teeny disco ball. It feels like a lodge. And if the idea of getting loaded next to an off-duty cop creeps you out, head next door to **The Little Joy.** This is a true dump. Two pool tables that most of the patrons are either too poor or too wasted to bother with, bathrooms covered in graffiti that only barely draws your attention away from the incredibly filthy floors. That white powder on the toilet seat? Could be coke, could be Ajax. Only way to tell is to snort it. And if you want that true lodge feeling, then hike over to Atwater Village to the **Bigfoot Lodge.** You walk in the door and are met by a statue of Smokey the Bear, the lodge's mascot, staring glassily at the DJ's booth. There's a green national park sign that proclaims this the Sasquatch National Forest. A fake fireplace glows on one wall, fake split wood siding lends the aura of a log cabin, the lamps are adorned with miniature deer heads, and bad taxidermy samples hang on the walls. The beer is $2 on Thursdays. It's the kind of place where you can mingle and have some fascinating drunken conversations—you won't feel stupid until you get home. Adirondack chairs continue the outdoorsy feel—there's a great sensibility in here that the 30-somethings who flock to the place clearly revel in. No attitude, no dress code, the bathrooms are for "Does" and "Bucks," the lighting is mostly red-tinged, and with all the fake wood around, you wonder if a forest fire is in the offing just outside in Griffith Park. Got that deer-in-the-headlights look? You'll feel at home here. And moving even farther east, **the Chalet,** in Eagle Rock, topped *L.A. Magazine*'s list of hip new joints. It's done up in faux Alpine style circa the mid-1950s. It's comfy and low-key but in my opinion rates high points for being next to the ever-crowded Casa Bianca Pizza place (p. 78). It's a perfect place to have a drink while you wait for a table next door. And in further bad news for Westside drunks who hate to drive, Highland Park is emerging as the next hot spot. **Footsie's** is the latest dive bar becoming popular with young drunks-in-training. It's dark, has a rock-based jukebox, and has strong drinks. The **Little Cave** has a bat motif thing going on, making it the perfect place for a Halloween night of trick-or-treating. Live DJ and a very decent—if a bit retro—jukebox. Comfy leather booths full of porkpie-hat-wearing hipsters. Run by the folks behind the Bigfoot Lodge, the Little Cave has the right combination of dive character, lack of pretension, and interesting clientele.

Okay, you're really not a pathetic loser, you just want to see some titties and have a drink... My first choice is **Cheetah's,** in the gray zone between Los Feliz, Hollywood, and Silver Lake. Drinks are strong and not outrageously priced; the dancers are unaugmented (as far as I could tell) and strip down to thongs. Best of all is the club's taste in music: hard-core punk to hip-hop. You just might be able to bring a date here and not appear too creepy. Maybe. The pool players barely look up when a new dancer comes out to work the pole—I've never been in a strip bar with less of a sexual vibe. Now if you want to see some nipples at the same time you're trolling for rock-star celebrities, then **Jumbo's Clown Room** is the place to come. Located in an anonymous strip mall on a particularly unglamorous section of Hollywood Boulevard, Jumbo's has been a cool, slightly wicked landmark since Van Halen used it in their videos.

Living L.A. rock roots... The Sunset Strip keeps on ticking somehow. An endless supply of air-guitar heroes and their girlfriends is its blood supply; there's still something magical about playing a club on the Strip. **The Roxy Theatre** retains a cachet for touring name acts, thanks partly to its history, its A & R–friendly atmosphere, and the fact that it has one of the best sound systems in the city. It's also a gathering place for all ages, which has an appeal. This is the Strip's class act. Right down the block is the **Whisky a Go Go,** which, like the Roxy, has instant name value for touring acts. It's a big, boxy room with decent sound and a bar. Every young band that came out of L.A. played here and so should you. Not on the Strip but of it nonetheless is Doug Weston's **Troubadour,** which for 40 years pushed everything that L.A. produced, from folk-rock to punk to metal. The place has a lot of room, good sound, no age limit, and three bars. Even though Weston is no longer with us, the Troubadour's booking policy is surging once again—proving that sometimes the veterans do know how to do it best.

Bars for locals... **Akbar** was a former alkies' bar that got taken over by new owners who didn't mess with the mood. Located in a bunkerlike box on Sunset Boulevard right next to a McDonald's, with no windows and little indication of what goes on inside, it's full of little Moorish touches, with a nice long bar, comfortable seats, healthy-size drinks, a smoke-if-you-want-to flexibility, and a wonderful jukebox. The **Smog Cutter,** an archetypal East Hollywood/Silver Lake dive, is one small room, funky and spartan, run by a very charming Vietnamese woman. It offers punk karaoke—obnoxiously trendy a while back—but thankfully the crowds have subsided.

Pub-crawl, Hollywood-style... If your idea of a good time is stumbling bar to bar a la New Orleans, then the Cahuenga Corridor is made to order. Begin at **The Sunset Room,** a former warehouse reborn as a celebrity playground. The ceilings are 35 feet high, just barely tall enough for the major egos that gather here. The idea here is a Hollywood supper club like in the golden age: one place to eat, drink, dance, and pick up an easily treated STD. It's velvet-rope hell, and unless you're the underwear model of the moment, your odds of entering on a busy night are dicey. Make reservations for dinner to make sure you'll get in; it's pricey but offers well-prepared California-French food. Next comes the **Burgundy Room,** an old-style Hollywood bar that was the first to be awoken from the dead by fresh young blood. It's dark, thank god, and completely forgiving, a place to get really drunk and bang your head on the bar. ***FYI:*** If you're cruising for a rent-a-date for the evening, upstairs is the Bargain Bin. A much cozier and tonier scene can be found across the street at **The Room.** Thanks to the hidey-hole alley entrance, The Room has a certain illicit speakeasy vibe. It's got good DJs, comfy booths, and decent drinks. Best nights are Tuesdays and Thursdays. The last room with a view is the hoary **Frolic Room,** a Hollywood legend (it's been around longer than most of the studios) that has fueled many an aspiring alcoholic. Need a little hair of the dog? Doors open at 6am and there are two happy-hour periods: 6 to 9am and 4 to 7pm. The most recent hot neighborhood is East Hollywood, long a dead zone of streetwalkers, badly disguised transsexuals, runaways, dealers, and the sad underclass that lives in the area. And so, of course, it was prime for gentrification via the local dive bars. At the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Western Avenue is the **Blu Monkey Lounge,** a newcomer that is drawing hipsters from all over the city. It's done up in faux Morocco decor—all plush pillows, carpets, cushy sofas, a smoking patio, and, most importantly, decent drink prices. To the west, at Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street, is the **Vine Street Lounge,** the newest attempt to lure B-list models and actors out into the night. The upstairs VIP area is anchored around a large circular bed—think of it as the most public casting couch in town. Overhyped, overpriced, shallow, and dumb. In other words, the perfect place to parade your new implants.

Toujours gay... Oh, where to begin? There's just so much to cover. By day, intellectuals play chess and spout fashion design and living philosophy at **The Abbey** in West Hollywood. By dusk, it's all about the cruise. The front patio/outdoor bar in the front, complete with statuettes and lighted fountains, is nice for happy-hour mixers, but as the night comes on, the best spot is in the back where personal cabanas with billowy curtains and dim lighting make for a better getting-to-know-you intensity. The Abbey is open 24/7 and is known for its rich desserts as much as its scene—the sinful cheesecake goes nicely with the sweetest beefcake views. **The Study** is popular with slightly older Latin and black cruisers. It's very casual, but there's a three-drink minimum if the bartender doesn't like you. It's fairly low-key, somewhere between a locals bar and a pre-Viagra cruising scene. **The Spotlight** is just plain bizarre. It's like some medium-range bar just off Revolución in Tijuana where ex-con lovers dance together while hookers work around them.

The Index

Please see Map 14 on p. 186 for all Nightlife listings. Bars are open until 2am unless noted otherwise.

The Abbey **(p. 198)** WEST HOLLYWOOD In the heart of boys town, this 24/7 cafe by day and eye-popping scene by night is a must-hit for men seeking men. Women allowed.... *Tel 310/289-8410. 692 N. Robertson Ave.*

Akbar **(p. 197)** Los Feliz This charming little bar on Sunset Boulevard where Hollywood, Silver Lake, and Los Feliz meet feels cozy, friendly, and ungentrified—even though it is.... *Tel 323/665-6810. 4356 W. Sunset Blvd.*

Bigfoot Lodge **(p. 195)** ATWATER Friendly crowd, mediocre drinks, but a welcome breath of freshness from L.A.'s pickup bars and red-rope scene.... *Tel 323/662-9227. www.bigfootlodge.com. 3172 Los Feliz Blvd.*

Blu Monkey Lounge **(p. 198)** HOLLYWOOD A new bar that has become immediately popular thanks to no cover and the cushy faux-harem decor. Sleazy Hollywood neighborhood, but who cares? There's no cover! *Tel 323/957-9000. 5521 Hollywood Blvd.*

Burgundy Room **(p. 197)** HOLLYWOOD Dark and reeking of an old Hollywood vibe. Looking for a place to break up with a lover who's going to throw a scene? Come here. Nobody will notice a thing.... *Tel 323/465-7530. www.burgundyroom.com. 1621 N. Cahuenga Blvd.*

The Chalet **(p. 195)** EAGLE ROCK Yes it's in Eagle Rock, but don't let that stop you. The ski-lodge theme somehow works and if not, head next door for one of the best pizzas in town.... *Tel 323/258-8800. 1630 Colorado Blvd.*

Chateau Marmont **(p. 193)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Try the cozy patio next door to the Bar Marmont for an old-Hollywood drinking experience.... *Tel 323/656-1010. www.chateaumarmont.com. 8221 Sunset Blvd.*

Cheetah's **(p. 196)** LOS FELIZ Neighborhood bar where the entertainment just happens to feature strippers.... *Tel 323/660-6733. 4600 Hollywood Blvd.*

Cole's Pacific Electric Buffet **(p. 190)** DOWNTOWN Skid Row adjacent, a great selection of beers, decent sandwiches, and, best of all, the true vibe of a downtown bar. No loft-dwelling lawyers here. ***One caveat:*** Park in a lot and watch your back.... *Tel 213/622-4090. www.colespebuffet.com. 118 E. 6th St.*

The Echo **(p. 189)** ECHO PARK The first couple of times, you may think you've gone on the wrong night. Don't worry: Just park and follow the cool locals in.... *Tel 213/413-8200. www.attheecho.com. 1822 Sunset Blvd. Cover varies from free to $15; occasional 18-and-over shows.*

Footsie's **(p. 195)** HIGHLAND PARK Same owners as Shortstop, fewer cop patrons, a dive bar that still retains some sense of history. Cheap drinks, zero attitude.... *Tel 323/221-6900. 2640 N. Figueroa St.*

Frolic Room **(p. 198)** HOLLYWOOD Right next to the Pantages Theater, this legendary watering hole hit its stride in the '40s and '50s. Since then it's been all downhill and the regulars like it that way. Strong drinks, a killer jukebox, and absolutely no sense of fashion.... *Tel 323/462-5890. www.bobsfrolicroom.com. 6245 Hollywood Blvd.*

Golden Gopher **(p. 191)** DOWNTOWN This dimly lit, badly decorated former Skid Row dive is the current in spot for slumming suits trying to show off their gritty street cred.... *Tel 213/614-8001. 417 W. 8th St.*

Good Luck Bar **(p. 191)** HOLLYWOOD A homage to Hong Kong that lacks atmosphere.... *Tel 323/666-3524. 1514 Hillhurst Ave.*

Grand Avenue Sports Bar **(p. 194)** DOWNTOWN Inside the Millennium Biltmore Hotel, this is the Mother of All Sports Bars. There are TV screens everywhere but in the toilets. So please: no conversation—just shouting.... *Tel 213/612-1532. 506 S. Grand Ave.*

Hank's Bar **(p. 194)** DOWNTOWN Located in the Stilwell Hotel, this is a Downtown icon for those who take their drinking seriously. No suits, no poseurs, no art-damaged wannabes.... *Tel 213/623-7718. 838 S. Grand Ave.*

Jumbo's Clown Room **(p. 196)** HOLLYWOOD A Hollywood strip joint where slumming rock stars come to add street cred to their image.... *Tel 323/666-1187. www.jumbos.com. 5153 Hollywood Blvd.*

Little Cave **(p. 196)** HIGHLAND PARK A Bigfoot Lodge spin-off, this is very of the moment, celeb/model-free, and usually has no cover. Bonus points for the bat-Dracula theme. Have a Blavod black vodka on me.... *Tel 323/255-6871. 5922 N. Figueroa St.*

The Little Joy **(p. 195)** ECHO PARK Talk about truth in advertising. You'll get little joy here although you'll probably get way drunk. Gross, possibly dangerous, a good place to have your front teeth knocked out by a local who doesn't like your looks. Recommended.... *Tel 213/250-3417. 1477 W. Sunset Blvd.*

Little Pedro's Blue Bongo **(p. 190)** DOWNTOWN Once a cop bar but now a hip-'n'-happening live music alternative Downtown bar thanks to the Blue Bongo. The Mexican cuisine is only decent, but the range of live acts and DJs is truly appetizing.... *Tel 213/687-3766. www.bluebongobar.com. 901 E. 1st St.*

The Mountain Bar **(p. 190)** CHINATOWN Probably the most interesting bar in Chinatown, this is the place to come if you want to connect with the vibrant Chinatown gallery scene. Designed by artist Jorge Prado, and it serves way interesting martinis.... *Tel 213/625-7500. 475 Gin Ling Way. Wed–Sun.*

Oiwake **(p. 192)** LITTLE TOKYO A fairly large (170-seat) second-floor restaurant that has the feel of a Japanese beer hall. The food (sushi, tempura, *nomiya* drinking appetizers) is adequate but the karaoke-fueled ambience is over the top. Feeling grumpy? You won't after you've been in here for a few minutes.... *Tel 213/628-2678. 122 Japanese Village Plaza Mall.*

The Parlour Club **(p. 189)** WEST HOLLYWOOD My favorite pansexual, hetero-friendly, attitude-free club. Minimal Electro, Analog, global echolalia, retro camp.... *Tel 323/650-7968. www.parlourclub.com. 7702 Santa Monica Blvd. No cover before 10:30pm.*

Polo Lounge **(p. 193)** BEVERLY HILLS A top-notch hotel bar and a major entertainment-industry hang.... *Tel 310/276-2251. In the Beverly Hills Hotel, 9641 Sunset Blvd.*

The Room **(p. 197)** HOLLYWOOD A cozy burrow of velvet curtains, live DJs, and decent drinks. Beware a weekend crowd that thinks it's discovered alcohol.... *Tel 323/462-7196. 1626 N. Cahuenga Blvd.*

The Roost **(p. 194)** ATWATER This is one of those classic forgotten lounge bars that has remained unchanged. Clean, friendly, perfect for the swinger in you.... *Tel 323/664-7272. 3100 Los Feliz Blvd.*

The Roxy Theatre **(p. 196)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Historic rock club on the Strip, with big-name acts and a great sound system.... *Tel 310/276-2222. www.theroxyonsunset.com. 9009 Sunset Blvd.*

The Shortstop **(p. 194)** ECHO PARK Former cop bar now taken over by wannabe trendoids who believe everything they're told.... *Tel 213/482-4942. 1455 W. Sunset Blvd.*

Silverlake Lounge **(p. 191)** SILVER LAKE Silver Lake's dive of the moment thanks to the live performances put on by the Fold.... *Tel 323/666-2407. www.foldsilverlake.com. 2906 Sunset Blvd.*

Smog Cutter **(p. 197)** HOLLYWOOD This tiny bar has the seedy ambience of an East Hollywood locals' hangout, but it still clicks. No windows, and a bathroom for the weak of bladder only.... *Tel 323/667-9832. 864 N. Virgil Ave.*

Spaceland **(p. 192)** SILVER LAKE L.A.'s seminal venue for grunge, noise, and art-damaged bands. But be warned—it's a $40 ticket if you park on the streets after 11pm without a local permit, so just pay the valet guy.... *Tel 213/661-4380. www.clubspaceland.com. 1717 Silver Lake Blvd.*

The Spotlight **(p. 198)** HOLLYWOOD Very quiet and soothing, where you bring your young man to be instructed in the ways of the world.... *Tel 323/467-2425. 1601 N. Cahuenga Ave.*

Standard Bar Downtown **(p. 193)** DOWNTOWN Forget the hotel—the best place to be is downstairs in the scene or upstairs on the rooftop bar.... *Tel 213/892-8080. 550 S. Flower St.*

The Study **(p. 198)** HOLLYWOOD An interracial gay cruising scene—very low-key and mature, but not geezerville.... *Tel 323/464-9551. 1723 N. Western Ave.*

The Sunset Room **(p. 197)** HOLLYWOOD Where you spend too much money for an okay meal in hopes that you'll spot Leo DiCaprio way across the room.... *Tel 323/463-0004. www.thesunsetroom.com. 1430 N. Cahuenga Blvd.*

Temple Bar **(p. 191)** HOLLYWOOD In the former Garage space, the joint has been upgraded with a faux-Chinese/Buddhist theme. Safe for Westsiders now.... *Tel 323/662-6802. 4519 Santa Monica Blvd.*

Tiki Ti **(p. 192)** HOLLYWOOD/LOS FELIZ It's all crazed bar decor, super-strong tropical drinks, no place to sit, situated on a stinky section of Sunset.... *Tel 323/669-9381. www.tiki-ti.com. 4427 Sunset Blvd. Thurs–Sat.*

Troubadour **(p. 197)** HOLLYWOOD Veteran roadhouse documenting the local music scene, from the Eagles to Ratt to Slaves on Dope. Good sound system, entertaining crowd.... *Tel 310/276-6168. www.troubadour.com. 9081 Santa Monica Blvd. All ages.*

Veranda Bar **(p. 194)** DOWNTOWN It's a stylish, mellow scene here at the Figueroa Hotel. If you're looking for a low-key, retro, moderately priced hotel bar alternative to the Standard, come here. Plus it's much closer to the Staples Center.... *Tel 213/627-8971. 939 S. Figueroa St.*

Vine Street Lounge **(p. 198)** HOLLYWOOD Got a pocketful of cash and nothing intelligent to say? Come on down! Best night? How about never? *Tel 323/464-2345. 1708 N. Vine St.*

Whisky a Go Go **(p. 196)** WEST HOLLYWOOD Another historic rock club that still packs 'em in with big-name acts.... *Tel 310/652-4202. www.whiskyagogo.com. 8901 Sunset Blvd. All ages.*

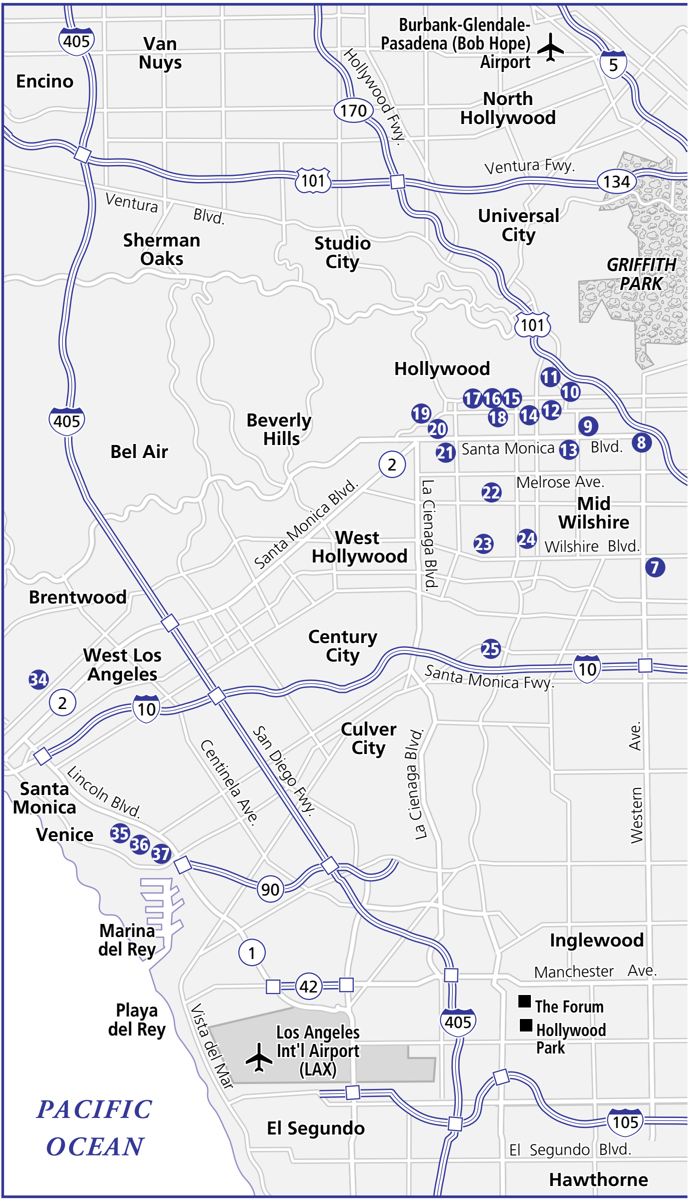
Zanzibar **(p. 190)** SANTA MONICA This clean, well-lit room is best known as the place where influential KCRW DJs Jason Bentley and Garth Trinidad spin (Fri and Sun, respectively).... *Tel 310/451-2221. www.zanzibarlive.com. 1301 5th St.*

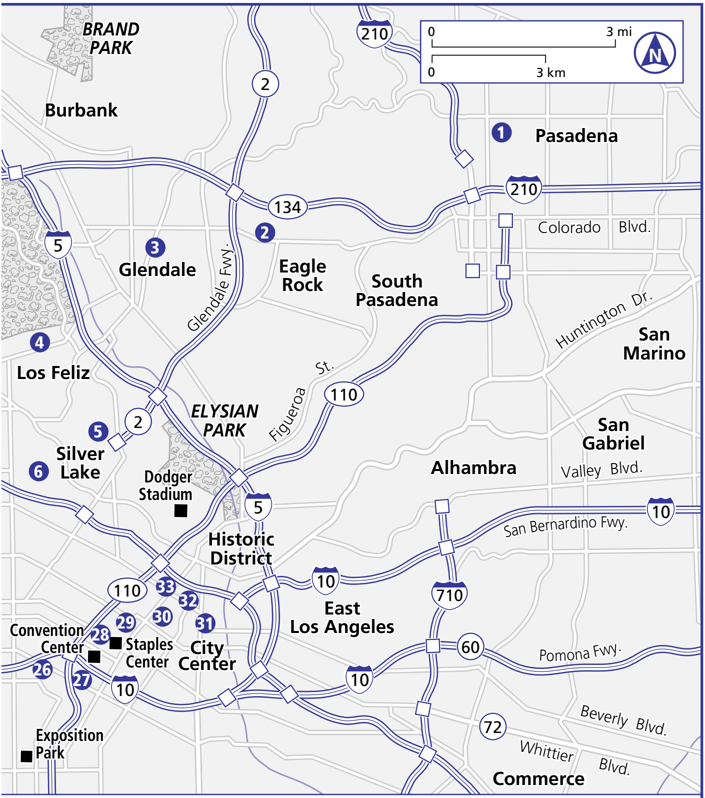
ENTERTA

INMENT

7

Map 15: Los Angeles Entertainment


Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena (Bob Hope) Airport
Van Nuys
Encino
North Hollywood
Ventura Fwy.
Hollywood Fwy.
Universal City
GRIFFITH PARK
Ventura Blvd.
Sherman Oaks
Studio City
Hollywood
Beverly Hills
Bel Air
Santa Monica Blvd.
Melrose Ave.
Mid Wilshire
Wilshire Blvd.
West Hollywood
La Cienaga Blvd.
Brentwood
West Los Angeles
Century City
Santa Monica Fwy.
Culver City
Santa Monica
Lincoln Blvd.
Centinela Ave.
San Diego Fwy.
Venice
Western Ave.
Marina del Rey
Inglewood
Manchester Ave.
The Forum
Hollywood Park
Playa del Rey
Vista del Mar
Los Angeles Int'l Airport (LAX)
El Segundo
El Segundo Blvd.
Hawthorne
PACIFIC OCEAN
405
5
170
101
134
2
10
90
1
42
105
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
34
35
36
37


BRAND PARK
Burbank
0 3 mi
0 3 km
N
210
2
1
Pasadena
210
134
2
Colorado Blvd.
5
3
Glendale
Glendale Fwy.
Eagle Rock
South Pasadena
Huntington Dr.
San Marino
4
Los Feliz
St.
Figueroa
110
ELYSIAN PARK
5
2
San Gabriel
Silver Lake
6
Dodger Stadium
Alhambra
Valley Blvd.
5
10
San Bernardino Fwy.
Historic District
110
33
32
10
710
East Los Angeles
29
30
31
Convention Center
28
Staples Center
City Center
60
Pomona Fwy.
26
27
10
10
72
Beverly Blvd.
Whittier Blvd.
Exposition Park
Commerce

Acme Comedy Theater **24**
Actors Art Theatre **23**
Actors Gang Theater **4**
Aero Theater **34**
Ahmanson Theater **33**
All Star Lanes **2**
ArcLight Cinemas & Cinerama Dome **18**
Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center **36**
Cavern Club Celebrity Theater **5**
Coast Playhouse **20**
The Comedy Store **19**
Cornerstone Theater **31**
Da Camera Society **27**
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion **33**
East West Players **32**
Egyptian Theatre **16**
El Capitan Theater **17**
Fountain Theatre **8**
Electric Lodge Theatre **35**
Greek Theatre **4**
Groundlings Theatre **22**
Hollywood Bowl **11**
The Improvisation **21**
John Anson Ford Theatre **10**
Los Angeles Lakers **28**
Lucky Strike Lanes **15**
Mark Taper Forum **33**
The Met Theatre **14**
Moving Arts **30**
Music Hall **7**
A Noise Within **3**
Nuart Theatre **37**
Open Fist Theatre Company **25**
Orpheum Theater **29**
Pantages Theater **12**
Puppet Masters **26**
REDCAT Theater **33**
Rialto Theater **1**
Walt Disney Concert Hall **33**
Zoo District **6**

Basic Stuff

Los Angelenos are shallow, okay? I admit it. The typical local's interest in high culture runs just about as deep as his tan. What's that Woody Allen line about how culture in L.A. means being able to turn right on a red light? He had it 100% correct. The fact that he was expressing this view in an art form that was *developed* in L.A. has nothing to do with it, I suppose. Film is pretty thin, too, Woody. Welcome to the kiddie pool.

Los Angeles has a ballet, an opera, and a symphony—all those grown-up institutions that signify some sense of adulthood. Who cares if no one takes them very seriously?

There are world-class jazz artists residing here, but they all make their livings playing as studio musicians: backing up the next flavor of the month or providing auditory tension for an animated Tarzan. That's okay—at least they can go home to Neutra split-levels in the Hollywood Hills, instead of some cold-water flat where they survive on crackers and heroin. The lounge life is a subject strictly for screenplays and Gen-Xers dripping in irony. And while there are 99-seat non-Equity theaters all over Hollywood, nobody makes any money from them. They only continue to exist because there are so many actors hanging around with nothing to do once they're through with their day jobs. The same might be said for L.A. comedy: Live stand-up does exist out here, but who wouldn't prefer a job writing for *The Simpsons* or Jay Leno and pulling down that nice, fat weekly check?

Getting Tickets

There's always **Ticketmaster** (Tel 213/480-3232; www.ticketmaster.com) or its outlets in music stores around town, like Tower Records, the Wherehouse, or Ritmo Latino. You can also find outlets at Robinson's-May Stores at the malls. If you've got a charitable heart, consider **Golden Circle Tickets,** 10 Universal City Plaza, #2000, Universal City (Tel 888/777-3044), which claims that a percentage of its sales goes to the "Wheels for Humanity Foundation." If you want to find a physical ticket office in your area, log on to **www.thecityoflosangeles.org/ticket** to see just who's within walking distance. If you really have to be in the front row and don't care *what* it costs, consider **Eddie's Tickets,** 1937 Ventura Blvd., Tarzana (Tel 323/255-7841). They claim they always get the first 10 rows for all concerts. Some people looking for Dodger tickets on the day of the game will take the Stadium Way exit into Elysian Park from the 5 Freeway to find scalpers (which I can't condone, of course, because it's illegal).

Sources

Your best sources for what's happening, right here, right now, are the weekly Thursday freebies *L.A. Weekly* and *City Beat* and, on alternate weeks, the *L.A. Alternative Press.* Here you'll find the most extensive listings for everything that's happening locally. The *Los Angeles Times'* Thursday Calendar section and their calendarlive.com website are killer, with loads of info, maps, and "Editor's Reviews" (which can be quite useful). You can also check out **laweekly.com** and **www.caprica.com/~aot/links.htm**, the latter of which has everything from freeway conditions to club listings to maps of LAX. It's even got the home page for Glendale. What could be more nerdish but oddly welcome? Finally, for the party-people underground, check **www.losangeles.tribe.net/local**.

The Lowdown

Class acts... The epicenter of high culture in L.A. has for years been the Music Center, a three-stage complex on Bunker Hill that's home to the Tony Award–winning **Mark Taper Forum,** nestled in the middle of the Music Center Plaza. The Mark Taper has nearly 800 seats, and every one is a winner. The stage is thrust into the room, giving viewers the sensation of sitting in an enclosed amphitheater. Presentations run the gamut from drama to comedy, and a number of their premieres *(Children of a Lesser God, Angels in America, Burn This)* have gone on to Broadway. That's in New York, I think. Then there's the **Ahmanson Theater,** the Taper's bigger, more responsible brother, where only true live-for-the-centuries drama and music perform. The big sister of the Music Center trio, however, is the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, a monster with more than 3,000 seats on four levels, chandeliers, curving stairways, and bathrooms I'd move into tomorrow if I could afford the rent. But that was then. Like many of L.A.'s serious live performance audience, I have a new love whose spiky hairdo just somehow feels *right.* I'm talking about the 15-years-in-the-making **Walt Disney Concert Hall,** finished in 2003 for $274 million, and the latest addition to the Music Center. With the Frank Gehry exploded design, exceptional acoustics, 2,265 seats, and world-class 10,000-pipe organ, there's clearly a new kid on the block. **The L.A. Philharmonic** and the **Master Chorale** both have moved here. In comparison, the **Dorothy Chandler Pavilion** feels, well, a little tired and faded, a dowager whose lipstick doesn't quite cover the mouth wrinkles. The pavilion was built in the early '60s and feels like it. The decor is horribly overdone, something your grandmother in the Valley thinks is "classy." That said, the seats are way comfortable and this is just the right place to see an opera or an over-the-top theatrical performance. For something more intimate and experimental, check out the **REDCAT Theater,** a 286-seat black box run by CalArts, tucked underneath the Disney. In Hollywood there's the **Pantages Theater,** a great old Art Deco house with a lobby that has to be seen to be believed. The midorchestra and front low balcony are the best seats in terms of acoustics.

Outdoor venues... Summertime means picnics, fireworks, and a trip to the **Greek Theatre.** There are 5,700 seats here, and the parking setup is wretched, but you're in Griffith Park, so the walk from your car to the theater is actually pleasant. Even if you're stuck sitting in the cheap seats, at least you have a great view of the park. Who cares if the performers look like tiny little stick figures? The booking policy is just a little too mainstream for my tastes—too much Chicago, not enough Death in Vegas—but it's still a wonderful facility, the kind of place parents think it's okay for Junior to go to on his own. Mom and Dad, meanwhile, have a picnic packed and a bottle of wine chilling for their evening out at the **Hollywood Bowl.** This is truly one of the special life experiences in Los Angeles. I can't say the acoustics are all that great, but the Bowl sure is pretty. It's also huge with 18,000 seats and consequently parking can be a major bitch. Use the Bowl's shuttle service if at all possible. Less known (except to locals) is the **John Anson Ford Theatre,** an amphitheater in Hollywood built in 1920 to resemble the gates of Jerusalem. It was funky and run-down for years and thus a prime place for up-and-coming punk bands to play, but following a late '90s $4.3-million renovation, the Ford is again on the A list of lesser-known acts. They do a little of everything—comedy, world music, punk, ska, Shakespeare, gospel, jazz, chamber music.

Moving-picture palaces... The classy little **Music Hall** theater in Beverly Hills used to be Liberace's stage set for his TV show, and now his ghost gets blamed whenever the projectionist screws up. Once a vaudeville hall, it's been chopped up into a three-screen movie house, like so many other classic theaters in L.A. Happily, however, the Music Hall (which is now run by Laemmle) has carved out a niche as a place where you can see the sort of international films that never make it into wide distribution. When was the last time you attended a Hungarian film series? Who knew there even was one? The **Orpheum Theater** is one of L.A.'s classic movie palaces, constructed with the over-the-top European-style flourishes and attention to detail that defined mid-'20s splendor. With more than 2,000 seats, five gold chandeliers, and a working pipe organ, the Orpheum was once Downtown's premier stage for vaudeville performers like Bob Hope and Bing Crosby and musical giants like Duke Ellington and Aretha Franklin. Today the place stands fully restored and still has only one giant screen inside.

Another restored theater from the golden age of cinema is the **Egyptian Theatre** in Hollywood. Built in 1922, it was designed to resemble an Egyptian temple, complete with statues, hieroglyphics, and an entrance framed by palms. The film society American Cinematheque oversaw its restoration and reopened the theater in 1998 with a screening of Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments,* which had premiered there 75 years earlier. It is now the organization's showpiece, where it screens everything from the latest first-run hits to silents, classics, independent films, and highly entertaining and educational retrospectives. This is the way movies were meant to be seen. American Cinematheque also runs the smaller but also charming **Aero Theater** in Santa Monica. It was built in 1940 and is way more low-key than the Egyptian.

One movie house that could use a little restoration is the **Nuart Theatre** in Venice, long an independent and now part of the national Landmarks Theaters chain. The seats are lumpy as hell, parking is a bitch, and there are no cheap matinee specials, but coming here is like buying your books at an independent: It's a vision of film that deserves your support. Besides, where else can you see a Betty Boop marathon? They don't sell tickets in advance, so if you plan on attending a popular event—which many are—then get here early. Cult alert: *Rocky Horror* still screens here every Saturday at midnight. For a similar vibe on the Eastside, go to the **Rialto** (also a Landmark theater). It was built in 1925, a blend of Spanish baroque and Egyptian motifs and is on the National Registry of Historical Places. It was slated to be cut up into a multiplex but thanks to a timely bankruptcy by Landmarks parent company, is still intact (if a bit seedy). Best architectural detail: a gargoyle with glowing red eyes that is perched above the proscenium.

Like the Egyptian, the **El Capitan Theater** was built in the mid-'20s. "Hollywood's First Home of Spoken Drama" is a glorious faux–Spanish Colonial building, and a certified historic site. It closed down during World War II after premiering *Citizen Kane,* then changed hands, and has since been restored close to its original glory by Disney and Paramount.

Taking the ultrawide view... It's hard to imagine two more different film experiences than the ArcLight and the Dome cinemas. The **Cinerama Dome** has been a Hollywood landmark for more than 40 years, famous for its ultrawide screen—32 feet high and 86 feet long—that required the use of three projectors (as well as multiple cameras during shooting). Cinema freaks loved it even though there were few films being released that could fully exploit the unique design. After rumblings that it might be demolished, then a "Save the Dome" movement, the Dome has been completely redone with new a sound system and projectors. Next door at **ArcLight Cinemas** it's a very different story: same projectors and audiophile approach to sound but reproduced in 14 black-box auditoriums on a smaller scale. The ArcLight owners get high marks for paying attention to making the film experience almost worth the nonpeak $11 ticket price. You'll never hear sound bleeding in from the other theaters, the superwide seats are very comfortable, and, most importantly, the sightlines are all good. You can reserve your seats online at www.arclightcinemas.com. ***Added bonus for alkies:*** The ArcLight is the only theater in California licensed for selling booze in its auditoriums, so you can get quietly drunk while you watch Angelina Jolie attempt to muster an emotional response.

Special stages... For a town whose main entertainment industry relies on endless repetitions of the exact same performance, it's a surprise that there is such support for live theater in L.A., including many big and small houses. What's even more surprising is that one of the most respected companies is in Glendale. **A Noise Within** is an Equity theater started by a trio of refugees from San Francisco's famed American Conservatory Theater that focuses on the classics from Shakespeare to Molière, Ibsen to Albee. It's based in a former Masonic Temple on Brand Boulevard, with church pews for seats. The production values are very high, with great costumes and sets, winning them scads of local critic awards. The result is a quality live theater experience in an intimate setting (about 150 seats)—a fairly rare experience here. They get bonus points for targeting 30% of their annual budget towards education-oriented productions. (Some 13,000 students from more than 100 local schools get an introduction to live theater here.) The **Open Fist Theatre Company** is a troupe of actors, writers, designers, and directors started in the late '80s by five graduates from Cal State Fullerton. Its home is a wonderful 3,000-square-foot Quonset hut on La Brea Avenue in Hollywood that has had many incarnations—vaudeville stage, dance rehearsal space (owned by Bob Hope), restaurant, puppet theater, bar. Refurbished with new seats, stage, AC, and lights, it now hosts such edgy productions as Sam Shepard's *Cowboy Mouth,* and Matei Visniec's *How to Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients.* You'll notice a strong foreign presence, both in their choice of material and in performers.

The Asian-American theater company **East West Players** has finally found itself a home worthy of its quality in the David Henry Hwang Theater, located Downtown in Little Tokyo. In its 40 years of existence, this group has premiered more than 100 plays dedicated to the themes of what it means to grow up in a cross-cultural world. With its strong community involvement, East West offers a unique outlet for young playwrights to develop work into professional material, making the transition from dialogue into drama. Production values are also much higher now than they were at the group's old space in East Hollywood. Founded by a performer/physician, the **Electric Lodge Theatre** is just the sort of thing one might imagine would exist in Venice. The facility was originally a Masonic lodge and was thoroughly renovated in 1996. The production values are first rate and a wild mix of artists, dancers, and actors have traipsed through here, from the Venice Theatre Works ensemble to jazz to *butoh* (Japanese dance) performances by artists in residence. They do a little bit of everything here in the workshops—Brazilian dance, yoga, ecstatic dancing, Capoeira, hatha yoga, Mommy & Me dance, tae kwon do, and *butoh.*

And now for something totally different... Thanks to L.A.'s so-delightful frivolity and shallow attention span, there are scores of bizarre places that our population of underutilized actors has found new use for. **Da Camera Society** takes its name from *musica da camera,* a 17th-century term for music performed in a chamber, or "camera." It's brought jazz to Art Deco buildings, baroque music to rococo salons, string quartets at a law school—you get the idea. No money? Check out the free Friday-afternoon open rehearsals of artists performing in Da Camera's Doheny Mansion series of concerts. Founded in 1986, the **Cornerstone Theater** is what good community theater should look like. It specializes in adapting to whatever is available—a mall, a housing complex for seniors—and thus introduces the theatrical experience to audiences in unusual environments. It's all good as long as it's not a theater, it seems, managing to make us all see the world with new eyes. Finally, **Osseus labyrint** is named for a head bone that helps you maintain balance. TMI? Shopping malls, antiquated hotels, an aviary on Catalina, an empty storefront in Baldwin Hills have all been recontextualized by Hannah Sim and Mark Steger, two hairless performance artists—they're part insect, part incubus, unreal, another species. Check out any of the above performances; you won't be sorry. You may, however, be expected to contribute some of your DNA.

Big dreams, small spaces... Meanwhile, the beat goes on in the 99-seat theaters, so-named because anything over that number means the house must pay union scale. These black-box spaces are concentrated mainly in Hollywood, but they can also be found in Pasadena, Santa Monica, and Culver City. The **Coast Playhouse** is smack in the middle of West Hollywood, and thus draws on a huge supply of visiting New York actors, as well as some famous big-screen faces (like Samuel L. Jackson). Not quite the premier 99-seat theater in town anymore, it still features well-staged shows with highly professional talent—the writing just may be a little weak at times. The **Fountain Theatre** in Silver Lake is small but very successful. They've had world premiers, West Coast premiers, and have secured a solid respect within the local theater community, winning more than 160 awards in the last 15 years. The only small theater in the city to win the Ovation Award three times. **The Met Theatre** group started in 1973 with three William Inge plays: *Dark at the Top of the Stairs, Bus Stop,* and *Picnic.* No lightweights here, no sir. The hardcore are actors, directors, and producers with good taste and ambitious goals. Sam Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class* had its West Coast premiere here. There's a similar high-profile scene at **The Actors' Gang Theater,** now 25 years old and known for putting on socially conscious productions, sometimes very raw in tone but always off-Broadway in quality, thanks to one of the founders, Tim Robbins. **Moving Arts** has not one but two facilities to work out of: a tiny Silver Lake space where the company holds rehearsals and writing and acting workshops, and its main stage Downtown at the Los Angeles Theatre Center.

I'VE GOT NO STRINGS

__Puppet Masters__ may sound like a gruesome sci-fi thriller, but it's really much more innocent: a venue where bits of wood, cloth, and string come alive in amazingly smooth gestures. The puppet shows at the Bob Barker Marionette Theater are still popular, even in these days of 500-channel cable. Thank god. A perfect place to hold a birthday party.

This is a respected group, known for quirky humor and adventuresome productions. Plays from here go on to New York, London, and Boston. **Zoo District** is named after the gritty underground area of Berlin in Bertolt Brecht's *Drums in the Night*, where artists and revolutionaries came to foment trouble, cultural and otherwise. That's the idea behind this Downtown company, which has a reputation for putting on funny, outrageous productions. The **Cavern Club Celebrity Theater** in the basement of a Silver Lake restaurant is beyond small. Think tiny, miniature, intimate. Claustrophobic? Well, just a bit. The themes are way gay, the production values existential at best.

Bowling for boredom... **Lucky Strike Lanes** is one of the few Hollywood & Highland attractions that has genuine local appeal and is the country's first "high-end bowling lounge." You'll find 1940s-era dining booths (not a bad spot for a date); an automatic scoring system that is 100% drunk-friendly; art installations over the lanes, from Hockney to Basquiat; a live VJ/DJ; plus a private room with four private lanes for those who like bowling in the nude. Or try Eagle Rock's **All Star Lanes,** where bowling meets its musical soul mate—rockabilly. Every other Saturday night is Bowl-a-Rama at this 1960s-era 25-lane alley in Eagle Rock. It's a little tired and well used but who isn't, these days? Bring your own shoes if you're serious, grease up that pompadour, and polish the '57 Chevy. This is old school like it should be.

Bohos with flip-flops... Over in Venice you'll find the **Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center,** the main outlet for L.A. poets who are serious about their craft. In existence for more than 2 decades, the facility has ongoing readings by the hip and famous Thursday through Sunday nights along with free community workshops and readings by developing local artists the rest of the week. Complementing the readings are the center's constantly changing gallery of visual art and the adjacent bookstore.

Making it up... An ever-popular improvisational comedy ensemble performs in the **Groundlings Theatre,** a comfortable but small theater in Hollywood with tiered seats and a live band to punctuate the skits. The audience is youngish, pop-culture savvy, and boisterous—just the right mix for riffing. **Acme Comedy Theater,** on North La Brea Avenue, is another famous sketch-training ground. They've sent alumni on to *Mad TV* as performers and have also produced Emmy Award–winning writers. The group is based in a renovated 99-seat theater that features great viewing from every seat, state-of-the-art production values, even AC. If you're a comic wannabe, their classes are highly recommended. **The Improvisation,** on Melrose Avenue in West Hollywood, is the best-known club for old-school-style stand-up comedy, and it's hosted more name acts than any other stage in town. Mitzi Shore's (Pauly's mom) **The Comedy Store** has ruled the roost here with an iron hand for years. It's not always been a comfortable experience—a comic famously leapt to his death off the roof. (He died not only onstage but on the sidewalk out front.) There are three rooms here and you'll always be guaranteed of an entertaining evening. (The drinks are *way* strong.)

Professional sports... It wasn't so long ago that being a sports fan in L.A. was a painful subject. First off, there's no professional football team so just don't bring that up, okay? In addition, recently the **Dodgers, Lakers, Clippers,** and **Kings** have all sucked in varying degrees. The 2000–02 NBA championships changed all that briefly but with the death of sportscaster Chick Hearn and the departure of Shaq, you just don't see that many Lakers flags on cars anymore. We've still got Kobe (for now) and slowly we've even gotten used to the Lakers' home at the **STAPLES Center** with its overpriced food and beer. Over at **Dodger Stadium** the Los Angeles Dodgers (aka the "Boys in Blue") have a new owner, a new warning track, a 1,100-foot advertising ribbon board, parking for 16,000, 300 new luxury seats behind home plate ($400 per game), and 1,300 new field-level seats down the foul lines (going for $65–$125). Prices are below the National League average—a Pavilion seat in the outfield is just $6—cheaper than a beer.

The Index

Please see Map 15 on p. 206 for all Entertainment listings.

Acme Comedy Theater **(p. 217)** HOLLYWOOD If you think Mad TV is funny, you'll love these guys.... *Tel 323/525-0202. www.acmecomedy.com. 135 N. La Brea Ave. Box office hours Tues–Fri 2–6pm. Prices range from mid-$20s to twice that.*

Actors' Gang Theater **(p. 215)** HOLLYWOOD Well respected and the antithesis of status-quo feel-good theater, the Actors' Gang is probably the best-known small theater in L.A.... *Tel 323/465-0566. www.theactorsgang.com. 6209 Santa Monica Blvd.*

Aero Theater **(p. 211)** SANTA MONICA One of American Cinematheque's two film houses. Classics, silents, independents. The perfect place to see *Apocalypse Now* or *Lawrence of Arabia* the way the directors intended.... *Tel 323/466-FILM. www.egyptiantheatre.com. General admission is $9, $7 for students and seniors, $6 for AM members.*

Ahmanson Theater **(p. 209)** DOWNTOWN Where the class Broadway acts come to provide a complete theatrical experience for the local moneyed classes.... *Tel 213/628-2772. www.taperahmanson.com. 135 N. Grand Ave., inside the Music Center.*

All Star Lanes **(p. 216)** EAGLE ROCK Rockabilly bowling. Need anything else?... *Tel 323/254-2579. 4459 Eagle Rock Blvd.*

ArcLight Cinemas & Cinerama Dome **(p. 212)** HOLLYWOOD If you've ever wanted to feel like a director at a private screening, pay a visit to ArcLight's complex.... *Tel 323/464-1478. www.arclightcinemas.com. 6360 W. Sunset Blvd.*

Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center **(p. 216)** VENICE Always underfunded but still fighting, this bookstore/performance center is an essential local literary outlet.... *Tel 310/832-3006. 681 Venice Blvd.*

Cavern Club Celebrity Theater **(p. 216)** SILVER LAKE Yes it's in the basement of a Mexican theater but that just means it's real, right? Gay-themed frequently and if you get bored, you can always go upstairs for some chicken mole and guac.... *Tel 323/969-2530. www.cavernclubtheater.com. 1920 Hyperion Ave.*

Coast Playhouse **(p. 215)** WEST HOLLYWOOD It's had its hits and misses, but never disappoints in presentation.... *Tel 323/962-9092. 8325 Santa Monica Blvd.*

The Comedy Store **(p. 217)** HOLLYWOOD This is the place where name comics come to work on their new material (or jump-start their careers). The list of people who have graced the stages here is extensive, from David Letterman to Damon Wayans, Roseanne to Robin Williams.... *Tel 323/650-6268. www.thecomedystore.com. 8433 W. Sunset Blvd. 2-drink minimum.*

Cornerstone Theater **(p. 214)** DOWNTOWN Oddball theater in even odder places. Community-based and with a great sense of humor, this is a highly recommended live theater experience.... *Tel 213/613-1700. www.cornerstonetheater.org. 308 Traction Ave.*

Da Camera Society **(p. 214)** CITYWIDE Creative music in creative locations. Community music at its best.... *Tel 213/477-2929. www.dacamera.org. Box office: 10 Chester Place, Mon–Fri 8:30am–5pm.*

Dodger Stadium **(p. 217)** SILVER LAKE Grab one of the 56,000 seats and one of the 18,000 parking spots.... *Tel 323/224-1448. www.dodgers.com. 1000 Elysian Park, near Sunset Blvd.*

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion **(p. 210)** DOWNTOWN Now second fiddle to the grand Walt Disney Concert Hall, this is still a great spot for the Los Angeles Opera.... *Tel 213/972-7211. www.musiccenter.org or www.taperahmanson.com/tickets.asp. 135 N. Grand Ave., inside the Music Center. Walk-up box office open Tues–Sun noon–8pm.*

East West Players **(p. 213)** LITTLE TOKYO For a dramatic insight into the fears and dreams of Asian/Pacific-Americans, the East West Players are just the ticket, especially in their fancy new 240-seat Downtown digs.... *Tel 213/625-7000. www.eastwestplayers.org. David Henry Hwang Theater, 120 N. Judge John Aiso St. Box office open 2 hr. prior to showtimes. Prices range from*

$20 for previews to $38 for orchestra, to $63 for opening night (includes hosted preshow bar and postshow reception with actors and director).

Egyptian Theatre **(p. 211)** HOLLYWOOD A nice big screen and an entranceway fit for Cleopatra.... *Tel 323/466-FILM. www.egyptiantheatre.com. 6712 Hollywood Blvd. Walk-up tickets are available 30 days in advance but only American Cinematheque members can get tickets by mail. General admission is $9, $7 for students and seniors, and $6 for AM members.*

El Capitan Theater **(p. 212)** HOLLYWOOD One of the classic movie palaces in Hollywood. Even if you don't want to see a movie, come by to check out the cast-concrete facade.... *Tel 323/467-7674. 6838 Hollywood Blvd.*

Electric Lodge Theatre **(p. 214)** VENICE This Venice workshop-theater brings together community outreach and cutting-edge performance.... *Tel 310/823-0710. www.electriclodge.org. 1416 Electric Ave.*

Fountain Theatre **(p. 215)** SILVER LAKE Only 78 seats in four rows but there's AC and they've gotten awards from Backstage West, Drama Critics, the *L.A. Weekly,* and so forth. High quality in a small space. Recommended.... *Tel 323/663-1525. www.fountaintheatre.com. 5060 Fountain Ave. Box office 11am–5pm daily or until showtime on days of performances. Previews $15, opening nights $27.*

Greek Theatre **(p. 210)** GRIFFITH PARK You may not be able to see the performers, but you will have a glorious view of the sage-covered hills of the canyon.... *Tel 323/665-1927. www.greektheatrela.com. 2700 N. Vermont Ave. Ticket prices vary $40–$115 (and higher, depending on the act).*

Groundlings Theatre **(p. 217)** HOLLYWOOD The best-known improv troupe in L.A. has produced scads of Ready-for-Prime-Time comedians.... *Tel 323/934-4747. 7307 Melrose Ave.*

Hollywood Bowl **(p. 210)** HOLLYWOOD This landmark facility needs no introduction. Best is the Mariachi Festival in June.... *Tel 323/850-2000. 2301 N. Highland Ave.*

The Improvisation **(p. 217)** WEST HOLLYWOOD This is the oldest and most industry-connected of L.A.'s improv houses.... *Tel 323/651-2583. 8162 Melrose Ave.*

John Anson Ford Theatre **(p. 210)** HOLLYWOOD A family-oriented very pleasant outdoor amphitheater right across the street from the Bowl. No seat is further than 96 feet from the stage. Summer shows here are wonderful.... *Tel 323/461-3673. www.fordamphitheater.org. 2580 Cahuenga Blvd.*

Los Angeles Dodgers **(p. 217)** ELYSIAN PARK Best bet? Series with traditional rivals the San Francisco Giants or the St. Louis Cardinals.... *Tel 323/224-1448. 1000 Elysian Park Ave.*

Los Angeles Lakers **(p. 217)** DOWNTOWN Even though they've been tanking recently, folks still flock to their games at the STAPLES Center. Come with cash in your wallet.... *Tel 213/742-7300. 1111 S. Figueroa St.*

Lucky Strike Lanes **(p. 216)** HOLLYWOOD Bowling goes uptown at this upscale high-tech, automatic-everything nightclub/bowling alley/hangout. Great drinks, very good food, 30-foot bar, live VJ/DJs, valet parking.... *Tel 323/467-7776. 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood & Highland.*

Mark Taper Forum **(p. 209)** DOWNTOWN The "experimental" section of the Music Center, the would-be gritty edge of theater and music.... *Tel 213/628-2772. 135 N. Grand Ave., inside the Music Center.*

The Met Theatre **(p. 215)** HOLLYWOOD Local writers, West Coast premieres, readings, revivals—a serious landmark for local drama.... *Tel 323/957-1152. 1089 N. Oxford Ave.*

Moving Arts **(p. 215)** DOWNTOWN Well respected, good production values, irreverent material.... *Tel 213/622-8906. 514 S. Spring St., at Los Angeles Theatre Center.*

Music Hall **(p. 211)** BEVERLY HILLS Although this old theater has been divided into three miniscreens, it is still one of the very few places in L.A. that consistently shows unknown foreign films.... *Tel 310/274-6869. 9036 Wilshire Blvd.*

A Noise Within **(p. 213)** GLENDALE This well-established theater group in Glendale is always respectful of the classics and never gimmicky.... *Tel 323/953-7795. www.anoisewithin.org. At the Glendale Masonic Temple, 234 S. Brand Blvd.*

Nuart Theatre **(p. 212)** WEST L.A. Funky and showing its age, this Venice-adjacent landmark always brings crowds in.... *Tel 310/478-6379. 11272 Santa Monica Blvd.*

Open Fist Theatre Company **(p. 213)** HOLLYWOOD Theater troupe performing in a classic Hollywood Quonset hut—good production values and cheap seats for Sunday matinees.... *Tel 323/882-6912. 1625 N. La Brea Ave.*

Orpheum Theater **(p. 211)** DOWNTOWN A beautifully renovated classic movie palace from the glory days. Now it is as likely to be showing a movie as hosting a revival meeting.... *Tel 213/ 896-9114. www.laorpheum.com. 842 S. Broadway.*

Osseus labyrint **(p. 215)** Performance art at its most disturbing, nude, and physical. Infrequent shows and popular, of course, in Europe. No phone or address. Check their website www.osseuslabyrint.net for upcoming shows.

Pantages Theater **(p. 210)** HOLLYWOOD This Hollywood matron of grand theaters continues to chug along.... *Tel 323/468-1770. www.pantagestheatertickets.com. 6233 Hollywood Blvd.*

Puppet Masters **(p. 216)** DOWNTOWN This Downtown puppet theater troupe works at the 40-year-old classic Bob Barker Marionette Theater. It's like *The Lion King* writ small.... *Tel 213/ 250-9995. 1345 W. 1st St.*

REDCAT Theater **(p. 210)** DOWNTOWN This is the Music Center's black box, an eclectic and always interesting theatrical partnership with the California Institute of the Arts. Located in the Walt Disney Concert Hall structure.... *Tel 213/237-2800. www.redcat.org. 631 W. 2nd St. Box office Tues–Sat noon–6pm.*

Rialto Theater **(p. 212)** PASADENA A classic 1920s house that plays new releases. So what if the seats have been host to a zillion butts? *Tel 626/388-2122. 1023 Fair Oaks Ave. 1st show of the day is just $6.*

STAPLES Center **(p. 217)** DOWNTOWN See the Lakers, Sparks, Kings, and probably Jack Nicholson at this 20,000-seater.... *Tel 310/426-6031. www.staplescenter.com. 1111 S. Figueroa St.*

Walt Disney Concert Hall **(p. 210)** DOWNTOWN The latest addition to the Music Center complex is visually and acoustically breathtaking. A must see.... *Tel 323/850-2000. http://wdch.laphil.com/home.cfm. 111 S. Grand Ave. Box office Tues–Sun noon–6pm. 30 min. free parking in WDCH garage.*

Zoo District **(p. 216)** HOLLYWOOD Dramatic company with a bent for the disturbing and zany—expect compelling visuals and stylish productions.... *Tel 323/769-5674. www.zoodistrict.org. At Sacred Fools Theater, 660 N. Heliotrope Ave.*

HOTLINES & OTHER BASICS

Airports... **LAX International** (Tel 310/646-5252). This is pretty much your only choice if you're flying in from most parts of the world. You'll land here, wait 20 minutes for your bag, then spend another half-hour trying to find your way out of the airport. The airport is laid out in a horseshoe shape, with the Tom Bradley International Terminal at the bottom. You depart from the upper level and arrive on the lower level. If you're leaving from one of terminals 5 through 8, cut through the midpoint access road so you don't have to make a full circuit. And if you're dropping someone off, do *not* leave your car at the white zone—it will be ticketed immediately. **Burbank Airport** (Tel 818/840-8830), which serves the San Fernando Valley, is a much more pleasant traveling experience. If at all possible, fly in here. There are two terminals in one building and one baggage carousel. This is 1950s *Brady Bunch*–land: There's not even a guard matching claim checks to bags.

Airport transportation... The subway was supposed to come to LAX but somehow that never happened. You can, however, catch a free shuttle from the airport to the Green

Line Aviation Station. Most visitors who don't have friends coming to pick them up take either a shuttle, taxi, or bus. The cheapest way to get into the city is the **MTA's bus.** Catch a free shuttle bus to Parking Lot C, where the MTA Transit Center station is. From there you can get buses to Downtown, Santa Monica, Torrance, or Culver City for $1.25. If you're in a hurry, wait for a Metro Rapid line bus. If you're trying to connect to Union Station train lines, take the Metropolitan Express (about $15). Shuttle vans for hire also troll around the airport (they're limited to three circuits), and taxis with official seals can be found hanging out at special taxi zones spaced irregularly around the airport (the most reliable is the one near the Bradley terminal). You should get a card from the taxi driver giving you an approximate cost to various locations. Taxi fares are standardized and you will get an estimate of the fare when you line up for a cab. Hollywood by shuttle is $34, while by taxi it's $40 to $45; Downtown by shuttle is $27, $38 to $45 by taxi; Santa Monica by shuttle is $25, $25 to $30 by taxi. **Super Shuttle** (Tel 800/258-3826) and **Prime Time** (Tel 800/733-8267) are the only two services allowed to pick up "walk-up" passengers, but you can also ride in **Coast Shuttle** (Tel 800/449-8267) or take the **Express Shuttle** (Tel 800/310-8267). If you're living large, by all means call for a car service. Try **Sky Limo** (Tel 800/359-1800) or **Black & White** car service (Tel 800/924-1624), roughly $50 to $75 for a ride anywhere in the city.

ATM... There are "Automated Thief Machines" all over the city, including 7-Elevens, liquor stores, and supermarkets. The surcharges for accessing your money varies from $1 to $3—plus whatever your bank charges for the "convenience."

Buses... A one-way trip on the **MTA** buses costs $1.25; if you plan to change buses, buy a transfer for an extra 25¢ (good only for that day). You'll need exact change, although they do have machines on the buses that will take dollar bills. The driver handles no money. Supermarkets sell tokens (a bag of 10 for $9) and you can also buy a monthly pass for $49. **Santa Monica City** buses (Tel 310/451-5444) serve Venice, Santa Monica, and Malibu at only 50¢ per ride. In WeHo there's a shuttle service from **West Hollywood Cityline** (Tel 800/447-2189) that covers most of West

Hollywood for 50¢. There are also **Commuter Express** (Tel 800/266-6883) freeway buses that go from Downtown to points all over the city and into the San Fernando Valley for fares ranging from $1.10 to $2.70. Buses supposedly run every 10 minutes during peak times. After 11pm, however, they'll be coming only every hour, provided they're on a route that goes all night. Check the bus schedule at the stop for running times. If you're staying in Santa Monica, the **Tide Shuttle** costs just a quarter and makes a loop every 15 minutes to Main Street, the Santa Monica Pier, the Third Street Promenade, and beachfront hotels.

Bus-bike combination... The MTA has front-mounted bike racks on its **Metro buses,** enabling bicycle enthusiasts to use public transportation, then bike on to complete their destination. No permit is required to use the Metro Bus bike racks, but you will need a permit to take your bike onto the **Metro Rail** system. To take your bike on the train, you need to apply for a free Metro permit through the mail (Tel 800/268-6883 for the application). Bikes aren't allowed during rush hour (6–9am and 3–7pm), which seems to go against the entire concept, but whatcha gonna do?

Car rentals... Everyone knows this is a car town. In Los Angeles you are what you drive, and if an econobox is who you are, then be my guest: **Avis** (Tel 800/831-2847), **Alamo** (Tel 800/327-9633), **Budget** (Tel 800/221-1203), **Dollar** (Tel 800/800-4000), **Hertz** (Tel 800/704-4473), and **National** (Tel 800/227-7368) are all at the airport, and all have locations in Hollywood, Downtown, and Santa Monica as well. For something a little different, however, consider **Beverly Hills Rent-A-Car,** 9220 S. Sepulveda Blvd. (Tel 800/479-5996), where you can get a Viper or a Corvette convertible, perhaps even a BMW 740 iL. What about a Jaguar? A Porsche? Or, for that *Swingers* feel, a classic convertible like a '57 T-Bird, a '65 Mustang, or a '69 Cadillac? Hell, why not a Hummer? Nobody'll mess with you then. The company will pick you up at your hotel or the airport and even toss in a cellular phone for you to use while you're cruising Hollywood. (Gotta have the phone, dude.) These exotics will run you about $150 a day—a cool $1,050 per week—but people *will* notice. Too over the top, you say? Well, nothing is as subtle and ostentatious at the same time as an electric car. And besides being quiet, they're not that expensive. **EV Car Rentals,** 9775 Airport Blvd., LAX (Tel 877/EV-RENTAL), has hooked up with Budget and expanded its fleet of eco-friendly vehicles. You can now rent hybrids like the Prius or Insight, natural gas full-sized Ford Crown Victorias, and full-on electrics, including a Rav4. **Access Paratransit** service is available within 3/4 mile of any bus or Metro Rail station in the county. It's curb-to-curb service with fares based on distance, from $1.50 to $4 for a one-way trip. Reservations can be made 45 minutes to 24 hours in advance (Tel 800/826-7280; TDD 800/883-1295). If you don't feel like driving, consider EVO Transportation (Tel 310/642-8500; www.evolimo.com), the country's first eco-friendly limo service. The fleet features ultralow-emission SUVs that seat six and have tinted windows, a fully stocked minibar, satellite TV, and PlayStations.

Child care... Best bet: **Babysitters Agency of Santa Monica** (Tel 310/306-5437). You pay $9 an hour (with a 4-hr. minimum) plus transportion. In return, you get an adult sitter who will take your kids to the beach, on a bike ride, or anywhere else you choose. Or try the **Babysitter Guild** (Tel 323/658-8792), which handles requests from hotels all over the city. Rates start at $8 to $11 per hour (4-hr. minimum) plus transportation. All the babysitters speak English, drive, have CPR training, and (did I mention?) drive. They've been in business for over 50 years.

DASH... This acronym stands for **Downtown Area Short Hop** (Tel 808-2273, no area code) and it's the best deal in town. A one-way trip costs a mere quarter, which includes a transfer, and if you're coming via Union Station or have a Metrolink pass, you can ride it for nothing. The shuttles are fast, are cleaner than buses, and come more frequently. You can get them from Downtown to Wilmington, Studio City to Crenshaw and Watts, Pacific Palisades to Echo Park. On the weekends there are special DASH routes: the Downtown Discovery Route (Bunker Hill, Civic Center, Chinatown, Olvera St., Little Tokyo financial district); Route E for shopping (fashion district, Broadway, jewelry district, Seventh St. Market Place, Cooper Building); and

Route F (Exposition Park, Sports Arena, Central Library). The buses only run from 10am to 5pm on the weekend, though. The weekday routes A through F, run from 5:30am up until 7pm (depending on the route) and come every 5 minutes.

Disability services... The **Disabled Riders Information Hotline** (Tel 800/621-7828) has information on public transportation for disabled passengers. The MTA has reduced fares for disabled riders, and some of its buses have kneeling lifts. Los Angeles has had strict codes since 1982 requiring equal access to buildings, so the newer structures usually have better ramps and other facilities than the older ones. In addition, **Dial-A-Ride** (Tel 800/431-7882) provides transportation for seniors or others with mobility disabilities. If you want to talk to City Hall, the **Mayor's Office for the Handicapped** (Tel 213/485-6334) has information about community resources and employment referrals. Finally there's the **Society for the Advancement of Travel for the Handicapped** (Tel 213/447-7284), which offers excellent advice for travel anywhere in the U.S.

Doctors... It is a state law that every emergency room must accept any emergency patient, regardless of his or her insurance status. Of course, you may bleed to death while they're trying to get you to pay upfront. Fortunately, they do take credit cards. If you're *really* broke, consider the **L.A. Free Clinic,** 8405 Beverly Blvd., West Hollywood (Tel 323/653-1990). You may wait a while to see someone, but it's clean, it's free, and the doctors are good. No matter how bad your injuries, if you're conscious, do *not* let the ambulance take you to King/Drew Medical Center. You've been warned.

Driving around... For starters, **learn the names and the numbers of the freeways and notice that they change.** The 101 can be the Santa Ana Freeway (south of Downtown), the Hollywood Freeway (north of Downtown), or the Ventura Freeway (north of Studio City). The 11 is the Harbor going south towards Long Beach and the Pasadena when it heads towards Pasadena. Happily, the 10 is always the Santa Monica, and the 405 is always the San Diego. The 5, on the other hand, turns into the 101 below the

Pomona split. Confused? Get yourself a ***Thomas Brothers Guide***—it's essential if you're going to be doing much driving. I have three copies, and I've lived here most of my life. We who live here measure distances by the time it takes to get from one place to another rather than by miles. The Westside? Twenty-five minutes, taking Melrose Avenue and then jumping down to Beverly Boulevard just before you hit La Brea Avenue. The Sunset Strip? Give yourself at least a half-hour, especially if you're driving on Sunset Boulevard itself. Going Downtown? Since I live in Echo Park, I prefer to take Sunset and avoid the 101 completely. See what I mean? *Traffic congestion in So Cal is growing by 3% a year*—there are 19 million vehicles here now, and over the next 20 years, that figure will rise by another seven mil. That's a lot of cars. Rush-hour driving speeds now average 35 mph—and are expected to drop to 15 mph by 2010. L.A. has the four busiest freeways in the state. The worst of all is the San Diego Freeway, with 331,000 cars per day inching down it. For every minute a car is stalled in a lane, there are 4 minutes of slowed traffic behind it. How to get around the mess? **Avoid the freeways during rush hour:** Use Washington or Adams boulevards instead of the Santa Monica; Broadway, Figueroa, or Main streets instead of Harbor Freeway; Riverside Drive instead of Ventura Boulevard. Remember, **between 6 and 9am and 3 and 7pm,** you're driving with about three million other motorists in metro L.A.—roughly the entire population of Dallas. Check the **CalTrans website** (www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo) for reports on current problems or call (Tel 800/427-7623). ***Warning:*** If you're in Beverly Hills, be extra cautious when going through Wilshire Boulevard at Santa Monica: It's the fourth-most-dangerous intersection in the country in terms of crashes. Not as dangerous but way more confusing is where Sunset Boulevard branches off from Hollywood Boulevard. Finally, one of the worst freeway interchanges in the country is the 101 and 405. You've been warned.

Earthquakes... Did you feel that? If you have to ask, then you don't need to worry. It's when it sounds like the earth is screaming and the room is shaking up and down that you have to start being concerned. **If you can get on the floor and under a table, do it**—and hold on until the shaking stops. **Keep away from all windows.** If you're in bed, stay there. Don't go outside immediately, because glass and wires may be falling. If you're already outside, **get into an open area away from buildings and power lines.** If you're driving when a tremor strikes, **stop anywhere out of the traffic flow as long as you're not under a bridge or overpass,** then stay inside your car. If you're in a crowded area, don't rush for the exits. Try to stay calm. Open all doors carefully following a quake, always take the stairs, never an elevator—and be aware that there will be aftershocks. Call the **American Red Cross** (Tel 213/739-5200; www.redcross.org) for more disaster-oriented information. You can always check for local earth movements at http://quake.wr.usgs.gov/recenteqs/Maps/Los_Angeles.htm.

Emergencies... When the rental car suddenly poops out on the freeway and you just barely make it to the shoulder, don't panic: There are call boxes located about every quarter-mile. *Never* attempt to cross the freeway on foot. For **police, fire,** and **ambulance,** call Tel 911. Other useful emergency numbers: **Suicide Prevention Hotline** (Tel 213/381-5111), **Poison Information Center** (Tel 800/876-4766), **Southern California HIV/AIDS Hotline** (Tel 800/590-2437), **Traveler's Aid** (Tel 310/646-5252), **California Relay Service** (TDD Tel 800/735-2929; voice 800/735-2922), **Rape Crisis Center/Hotline** (Tel 310/392-8381).

Foreign-currency exchange... American Express Travel Agency has offices in Downtown (Tel 213/627-4800), Beverly Hills (Tel 310/274-8277), Santa Monica (Tel 310/395-9588), Pasadena (Tel 626/449-2281), and West Hollywood (Tel 310/659-1682). **Thomas Cook Currency Services** (Tel 800/287-7362) has outlets in Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, and Santa Monica, as well as in AAA offices in Downtown, by the airport, and in Venice. In Hollywood, try **Foreign Exchange Limited** (Tel 323/467-9764). For "the best rate in town" there's **Foreign Currency Express** (Tel 213/624-3693) in Downtown. At the airport, **L.A. Currency Exchange** (Tel 310/417-9735) has five counters that stay open until 11:30pm every night. In Beverly Hills you'll find **Associated Foreign Exchange** (Tel 310/274-7610), open until 3pm on Saturday. Finally, most large banks have exchange windows as well—although you may not like the rates you get.

Gay and lesbian resources... **The Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center,** 1625 N. Schrader Blvd., West Hollywood (Tel 323/993-7400), is the largest gay and lesbian community full-service facility in the world. It provides legal and medical referrals and advice, has a great outreach program, and runs the fabulous **Village at Ed Gould Plaza** (Tel 323/461-2633), which contains a performance space, a coffee shop, an Internet cafe, and art galleries. Finally, we don't have a gay ghetto here but rather a largely gay city—our newest one: West Hollywood. Check with the **West Hollywood Convention and Visitors Bureau** (Tel 310/289-2525) for free booklets on the town's nightlife and cultural activities.

Gridlock... Don't even think about blocking the intersection if your chances are nil for getting through before the light turns red, at least not in West Hollywood. The Anti-Gridlock Act means you'll get a $100 fine, especially at the intersections of La Cienega Boulevard and Fountain Avenue; Fairfax Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard; Doheny Drive and Sunset Boulevard; and La Cienega and Sunset.

HIV/AIDS... It's not just a gay disease anymore but an equal opportunity killer. The **AIDS Clinic for Women** (Tel 323/295-6571) and the **AIDS Healthcare Foundation Clinic,** West Hollywood Cedars-Sinai Medical Office Towers, 8631 W. 3rd St., Suite 740E (Tel 310/657-9353), will both give you help and advice regardless of your insurance situation. For outreach programs, there's **AIDS Project Los Angeles** (Tel 323/993-1600). And to get a free, anonymous HIV/AIDS test, come by the **Jeffrey Goodman Special Care Clinic,** 1625 Schrader Blvd., Hollywood (Tel 323/993-7500). Don't kid yourself. There is *no* cure yet.

Homeless... **Midnight Mission,** 601 S. San Pedro St., Downtown (Tel 213/624-9258), one of L.A.'s oldest homeless-resource centers, offers counseling, food, and shelter. ***Added bonus:*** They've just moved to a new 123,000-square-foot facility that triples their former capacity: 340 beds, 14 transitional apartments, a 6,000-square-foot gym. They moved from their former space on the edge of the gentrifying Old Bank District to this new space at 6th and San

Pedro streets, close to their brothers in service: the **Union Rescue Mission,** 545 S. San Pedro St., Downtown (Tel 213/347-6300); the **Weingart Center,** 566 S. San Pedro St., Downtown (Tel 213/627-9000); and the **Frank Rice Safe-Haven Shelter for Homeless with Mental Illness,** 527 S. Crocker St., Downtown (Tel 213/488-0031), run by Lamp Community.

Newspapers... If you want hard news, there's really only the *Los Angeles Times.* Sorry about that. If you don't mind getting newsprint all over your fingers, however, there are also the various Thursday weeklies to peruse. First there's the *L.A. Weekly,* which has a left bias, an insanely dense layout that's nearly impossible to read, and the most reliable and comprehensive listings in town. Coming up behind it are *City Beat, Los Angeles Alternative Press,* and *Al Borde,* a twice-monthly Spanish-language freebie that has a street-level view of local Latino culture, from Roc en Español and techno clubs to the latest films and restaurants. For classifieds of every variety, from autos to apartments to guns to real estate to jobs, pick up the *Recycler.* There are also a slew of gay and lesbian throwaways like *Frontiers* and *Fab* as well as regional journals such as *Venice* and the *Argonaut,* all of which can be found at coffee shops, record stores, clubs, and restaurants. For a real take on your neighborhood, look for the *L.A. Independent,* a free weekly with a "Crime Blotter" list of the week's weirdest police reports, delivered in a deadpan Joe Friday–style.

Parking... Depending on where you're going, the eternal quest for a parking spot can make your trip heaven or hell. *Always* check the parking signs, because some meters are even active on Saturday until 8pm. Conversely, there are many areas where there is only meter parking at nonrush-hour times, usually prior to 3pm. Some of the meters Downtown cost 25¢ for 7 minutes, so get a roll of quarters if you plan to be going there a lot. Also check the costs in underground parking lots—the **ABC Entertainment Center** can cost you as much as $22 if you're there all day. (It's the same amount if you lose your ticket.) On the Westside, permit parking is the deal—which means you have to be a resident to park here during certain hours. There are also **street-cleaning days** almost everywhere that require you to shift your car to the other side of the street, with zero grace time. If the sign says you can't park on Sanborn between 10am and noon, you'll get a ticket at 10:05—guaranteed. Ditto if you park in a handicapped space. (That fine is $350.) If you're driving a rental car, the tickets are your responsibility—and all fines double in cost if they aren't paid within 30 days. Overall, West Hollywood is the worst area in the city for nonresidents to find parking. **Use valet parking** if you're in a heavily restricted area. When you're in Beverly Hills, Glendale, or Santa Monica, the **city-run parking lots** are your best option (most stores will validate). Downtown the lots are all private, and the farther you are from City Hall, the cheaper they are. Little Tokyo and below Alameda are the best. Large mall parking structures often have 3-hour grace periods. If you get towed instead, don't call me—contact the nearest police station to find where your car went. It'll cost you about $150 in cash, plus the ticket, to get your wheels back, depending on where you were illegally parked.

Pharmacies... Most **Savon Drug** stores (Tel 800/627-2866) are open 24 hours, as is the **Rite-Aid Drug Store** (Tel 310/273-3561) in Beverly Hills.

Phone facts... Once upon a time, the whole city used to be area code 213. Nowadays that covers just a tiny area of Downtown. Silver Lake, West Hollywood, and Hollywood are all 323; Beverly Hills is 310 or 323; and West L.A., Santa Monica, and Venice are also 310. This is all in a state of flux now, however, since an overlay system was put in place and then rescinded after huge caller complaints. Pasadena and the east Valley are 626, while the Valley itself is 818. Basic calls are 35¢; after that, it depends on who owns the phone you're using. But, don't you have a cell, anyway?

Post offices... The **Worldway Postal Center,** 5800 W. Century Blvd., Inglewood (Tel 310/337-8845), located near LAX, stays open until midnight. You can also send express mail 24 hours a day from here.

Radio stations... On the commercial side of the FM dial, you have a few choices. For the recalcitrant indie rock freak, there's the "world-famous" **KROQ (106.7),** the alternative/new-rock king. If you want something less predictable, try **Indie 103 (103.1).** Henry Rollins, the Sex Pistols' Steve Jones, and Rob Zombie all have shows on the station. Hip-hop lovers tune in to **Power 106 (106).** Everything else worth tuning in to is commercial-free: **KPFK (90.7),** the best alternative left-leaning station in the city, featuring a huge selection of music, news, and commentary; **KCRW (89.9),** the yuppies' choice, smug and pretentious but also the home of "Le Show," "Which Way L.A.," and "Metropolis"; **KPCC (89.3),** the less smug alternative to listening to NPR programs on KCRW; **KUSC (91.5),** mostly classical; and—if you can get its signal—**KXLU (88.9),** the youngest station and the one with the most street cred, playing all types of noncommercial music. Finally, for jazz, look for **KJAZZ (88.1),** an all-jazz and blues station from Cal State, Long Beach. On the AM dial, it's talk, talk, talk: **KMX (1070),** traffic and news; **KABC (790),** more traffic and news; **KFWB (980),** still more traffic and news; and **KFI (640),** offering basic right-wing rant radio. For your daily dose of realism and a listing of the current lies spinning out of Washington, Air America broadcasts on **KTLK (1150).**

Smoking... Is bad for you. In the state of California, you cannot smoke in any public building, bar, restaurant, office, or on beaches from Malibu to San Clemente. Aside from the airport, which has little smoking patios in every terminal, you basically can't smoke inside anywhere.

Subways and trains... With the addition of the new Orange Line, it's possible to go all the way from the Valley to LAX in less than 90 minutes and for less than $3. Sure you have to transfer twice and take a shuttle the last few blocks to the terminals, but who's quibbling? And unbelievably most of the park/ride lots supporting Metro Rail are free. Notable exceptions: Union Station, Hollywood/Vine. Yes, we actually have a functioning public rail system in So Cal, a combination of Metro Rail (Green, Orange, Gold, Red, and Blue lines) and the commuter network of MetroLink (Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino, Oxnard, and Ventura counties). Everything connects (more or less) at Union Station in Downtown: **Metro Rail** (Tel 800/COMMUTE), **MetroLink** (Tel 800/371-LINK), and **Amtrak** (Tel 800/USARAIL).

Taxis... The only way to get a taxi is to call one. On the Westside there's **Beverly Hills Cab** (Tel 800/273-6611), while Downtown is served by **Checker Cab** (Tel 800/300-5007). **Independent Taxi** (Tel 800/411-0303), driver-owned/operated, is the oldest cab company in the city; they'll quote prices over the phone and "no trip is too short." All cabs take credit cards, and they'll usually be at your door in 15 minutes or less. The basic fare is $2 plus 20¢ for each additional 1⁄10 mile. There's a $2.50 surcharge for any ride originating at LAX.

Tipping... Like New Yorkers, we double the tax for the tip, maybe adding a little bit on top to put it in the 17%-to-18% range. Doormen get $1 for hailing a cab, porters $1 a bag, bartenders 15% to 20% of the bill, hotel maids $1 to $2 a night per person, coffee-shop drones all of your returned change, and panhandlers 50¢ per handout.

TV tapings... For shows at **CBS Television City,** 7800 Beverly Blvd., West Hollywood (Tel 323/852-2458), it's easiest to just go to the walk-up window for free tickets between 9am and 5pm. For tickets by mail, write to: CBS Tickets, 7800 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036. Specify the show, date, and number in your party, and include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. You can also check on local TV tapings, regardless of the network or production company, by contacting **Television Tickets** (Tel 323/467-4697). They can reserve your seats for TV shows, or hire you to be a faceless member of a crowd scene for TV shows, movies, and commercials. Lotsa laughs.

GENERAL INDEX

- The Abbey, 198, 199
- Accommodations, 16–45. *See also* Accommodations Index
  - Beverly Hills, 27–28, 36, 37, 41–43
  - Catalina Island, 25–27, 40, 42, 45
  - Downtown, 29, 38, 41–44
  - gay-friendly, 28–29
  - Hollywood, 39, 40, 42
  - hostels, 22, 37, 39, 44
  - Little Tokyo, 29, 41, 42
  - Miracle Mile, 29–30
  - Pasadena, 26
  - price-is-no-object, 24–25
  - reservations, 18
  - Santa Monica, 23–24, 37–39, 41, 43, 44
  - with unconventional style, 20–21
  - Venice, 21–22, 40, 44
  - West Hollywood, 36–38, 40–44
- Acme Comedy Theater, 217, 218
- Actors' Gang Theater, 215, 218
- Aero Theater, 211, 218
- AFI Film Festival, 102
- Agent Provocateur, 163, 172
- Ahmanson Theater, 209–210, 218
- Airports, 225–226
- Akbar, 197, 199
- All Star Lanes, 216, 218
- American Apparel, 164, 172–173
- American Rag CIE, 158, 173
- Amoeba Music, 155, 173
- Angeles National Forest, 137
- Anime Jungle, 152, 173
- Anzen Hardware, 161, 173
- Aquarium of the Pacific, 140
- Aquariums, 140
- Architours (architecture tours), 103, 118
- ArcLight Cinemas & Cinerama Dome, 212–213, 218
- Aron's Records, 154–155, 173
- Arroyo Seco trail, 138
- Art Center (Pasadena), 109, 118
- Art galleries, 106–108
- Art Share, 107, 118
- Avila Adobe, 95, 97, 119, 125

- Backbone Trail, 133
- Back Door Bakery, 155, 173
- Bars, 190–198
- Basketball, 137–138
- Beaches, 130–131, 134–135
- Bergamot Station Arts Center, 106, 118
- Berlin Wall (Poetry Wall), 98
- Beverly Hills
  - accommodations, 27–28, 36, 37, 41–43
  - shopping, 148
- Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center, 106, 118, 216–217, 219
- Bigfoot Lodge, 195, 199
- Bike stores, 171–172
- Biking and mountain biking, 101, 138–140, 227
- Billy Shire Fine Arts, 106–107, 118
- Blessing of the Animals, 100
- Blessing of the Cars, 101
- Bloom's General Store, 107, 118–119
- Blu Monkey Lounge, 198, 199
- Bodhi Tree Bookstore, 167–168, 173
- Book Soup, 168–169, 173
- Bookstores, 155–156, 167–170
- Brand Books, 155, 173
- Brown Mountain Turnoff, 138
- Budget Bikes, 172, 173–174
- Bunker Hill, accommodations, 21
- Burbank Airport, 225
- Burgundy Room, 197, 199
- Buses, 226–227

- Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, 140–141
- California Plaza Watercourt, 143
- Camping, 136–137
- Car rentals, 12–13, 227–228
- Catalina Island, accommodations, 25–27, 40, 42, 45
- Catalina Island Golf Club, 132
- Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, 99, 119
- Cavern Club Celebrity Theater, 216, 219
- CBS Television City, 236
- Cemeteries, 112
- *Chain Reaction,* 113
- The Chalet, 195, 199
- Chateau Marmont, 193, 199
- Cheetah's, 196, 200
- Child care, 228
- Chinatown
  - accommodations, 19, 43
  - restaurants, 60, 71, 76
  - shopping, 154
- Chinese Moon Bridge, 9
- Chinese New Year, 100
- Chulerias, 162, 174
- Cinco de Mayo, 101
- Cinerama Dome, 212
- City Hall, 9, 110–111
- Claudia Laub, 170, 174
- Coast Playhouse, 215, 219
- Cole's Pacific Electric Buffet, 190, 200
- The Comedy Store, 217, 219
- The Continental Shop, 150, 174
- Cornerstone Theater, 219
- *Corporate Head,* 113
- Currency exchange, 231

Da Camera Society, 214, 219
The Dance Collective, 107, 119
DASH (Downtown Area Short Hop), 228–229
Decades, Decades Two, 158, 174
Descanso Gardens, 115, 119
Destroy All Music, 167, 174
Dia de los Muertos, 102
Disability services, 229
Distant Lands Travel Bookstore & Outfitters, 153, 174
Diversions, 92–143
Dockweiler State Beach, 135
Doctors, 229
Dodger Stadium, 217, 219
Doo Dah Parade, 102
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 210, 219
Downtown
    accommodations, 29, 38, 41–44
    diversions, 118–120, 122–126
    nightlife, 200–203
    restaurants, 77, 79, 81, 84–89
    sights and attractions, 99
Driving, 9–10, 229–230
Dusk, 113

Earthquakes, 1, 230–231
East West Players, 213–214, 219–220
The Echo, 189, 200
Echo Park, 4
    nightlife, 200–202
    restaurants, 78, 80, 83, 84, 86–88
Echo Park Historical Society, 141
Egyptian Theatre, 95, 119, 211, 220
El Capitan Theater, 212, 220
Electric Lodge Theatre, 214, 220
El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, 97, 119
Elysian Park, 114, 119
Emergencies, 231
E N, 161, 174
Entertainment, 206–222
Entertainment Industry Development Corporation, 11–12
Every Picture Tells a Story, 169, 174
Exposition Park, 114, 119–120

Fandango Salon, 160, 174
Farmer's markets, 153–154
Festival of Masks, 102
Fiesta Broadway, 101
Fifth Street Dick's Coffee, 107, 120
Flea markets, 150
Flexcar, 12–13
Footsie's, 195–196, 200
Fountain Theatre, 215, 220
Freeways, 9–10, 94, 103, 229–230
French restaurants, 59–60
Frolic Room, 198, 200

Garage Company, 171, 174
Garage sales, 150
Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade, 101
Gay and lesbian travelers, 232
    accommodations, 28–29
    bars, 198
The Geffen Contemporary, 104, 120
Geographia Map and Travel Bookstore, 153, 175
George C. Page Museum, 96, 122, 166, 175
Getty Center, 97–98, 120
Ginza YA Bakery, 155, 175
Girl Seated Against a Square Wall, 113
Glendale Certified Farmer's Market, 154, 175
Golden Dragon Parade, 100
Golden Gopher, 191, 200
Golf, 131–132
Golyester, 158, 175
Good Luck Bar, 191, 200
Goodwill Industries, 158, 175
Govinda's International Imports, 152, 175
Grand Avenue Sports Bar, 194, 200
Grand Central Market, 151, 175
Grauman's Chinese Theatre, 95, 113, 120
Great Wall Books & Art, 152, 175
Great Wall of Los Angeles, 98
Greek Theatre, 210, 220
Griffith Observatory Satellite, 120
Griffith Park, 113–114, 120, 123, 124, 131, 132–133, 139
A Grocery Warehouse, 151, 175
Groundlings Theatre, 217, 220
Gypsy, 159–160, 176

Hammering Man, 113
Han Cholo, 162, 176
Hank's Bar, 194, 200
Heal the Bay Ocean Discovery Center, 141
Helen's Cycles, 171, 176
Hennessey & Ingalls, 168, 176
Hermosa Beach Pier, 141
Hiking, 132–134
Hollyhock House, 110, 121
Hollywood
    accommodations, 39, 40, 42
    diversions, 121, 122, 124, 125
    nightlife, 199–203
    restaurants, 77–79, 84–87, 89
    sights and attractions, 111–112
Hollywood, Lake, 131
Hollywood & Highland, 95, 149, 217
Hollywood Boulevard, 94–95
Hollywood Bowl, 210, 220
Hollywood Christmas Parade, 102
Hollywood Entertainment Museum, 109–110, 121
Hollywood Farmer's Market, 153–154, 176
Hollywood Forever Memorial Park Cemetery, 112, 121
Hollywood RockWalk, 113, 121
Hollywood Wax Museum, 121
Holy Cross Cemetery and Mausoleum, 112, 121

Homage to Downtown Movie Palaces, 113
Homeless resources, 232–233
Hostels, 22, 37, 39, 44
Huntington Beach Pier, 141
Huntington Gardens, 121
Hustler Hollywood, 171, 176

Illiterature Bookstore, 169, 176
I. Martin, 171–172, 176
The Improvisation, 217, 220
Indian restaurants, 64–65, 79, 80, 82, 85, 88
In House, 157, 176

Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, 142–143
Japanese American National Museum, 97, 105, 122, 166, 177
Japanese restaurants, 58–59, 79, 83–85, 87, 88
Jim Gilliam Recreation Center, 137
John Anson Ford Theatre, 210–211, 220–221
Jumbo's Clown Room, 196, 200

KCET, 115, 122
Kicks, 166, 177
The Kids Are Alright, 162, 177
Kinokuniya, 152, 177

L.A. Architecture Tours, 103, 122
La Brea Tar Pits, 96, 122
La Gran Limpieza, 101
La Jolla Canyon, 133
La Jolla Valley Camp, 133
Lake Shrine at the Self-Realization Fellowship, 142
Lakes of El Segundo, 132
La Luz de Jesus Gallery, 108, 122
Las Posadas, 103
LAX International, 225
  restaurants, 66, 79, 81
Leimert Park Fine Art Gallery, 108, 122
Leo Carrillo State Beach, 135
Lingerie, 163–164
Little Cave, 196, 201
The Little Joy, 195, 201
Little Pedro's Blue Bongo, 190, 201
Little Tokyo
  accommodations, 29, 41, 42
  restaurants, 57–58, 79, 83, 85, 88
  shopping, 152, 160
Little Tokyo Square, 150–151, 177
Los Angeles Athletic Club, 21
Los Angeles Central Library, 105–106, 122
Los Angeles City Hall, 110, 123
Los Angeles Conservancy Walking Tours of Downtown, 123
Los Angeles County Fair, 102, 123
Los Angeles Dodgers, 221
Los Angeles Film Office, 12
Los Angeles Lakers, 221
Los Angeles Marathon, 100
Los Angeles Museum of Television and Radio, 109, 123
Los Angeles River beach, 130–131
Los Angeles Times Festival of Books, 106
Los Angeles Zoo, 95–96, 123
Los Feliz Municipal, 132
Lotus Festival, 101
Lucky Strike Lanes, 216, 221
Luxe de Ville, 163, 177

MAK Center for Art and Architecture/ Schindler House, 110, 123
Malibu, beach, 134–135
Manhattan Beach Municipal Pier, 141
Marathon, Los Angeles, 100
Marine Studies Lab and Aquarium, 141
Mark Taper Forum, 209, 221
Massage Garage, 143
Massages, 143
Matty's, 160, 177
The Met Theatre, 215, 221
Michael R. Thompson Books, 168, 177
Miracle Mile, accommodations, 29–30
Modernica, 156, 177
Monumental Torso of the Walking Man, 113
Mother's Beach, 135
The Mountain Bar, 190, 201
Mountain biking, 138–140
Mount Lowe trail, 133
Moving Arts, 215, 221
Mulholland Drive, 9
Murals, 98
Muscle Beach, 136
Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA), 104, 124
  Gift Store, 166, 177
Museum of Erotic Art, 109, 124
Museum of Jurassic Technology, 108, 124
Museum of Neon Art (MONA), 100, 124
Museum of the American West, 96, 124
Museum shops, 166
Music Hall, 211, 221
Music stores, 166–167

Nahui Ohlin, 162, 178
NBC Television, 115, 124
Necromance, 159, 178
Neighborhoods, 4–5
Neon signs, 100
Newspapers, 233
Nightlife, 186–223
Nisei Week, 102
A Noise Within, 213, 221
Nuart Theatre, 212, 221

Oiwake, 192, 201
OK, 156, 178
Ole Henriksen Face & Body Shop, 143
Olvera Street, 95, 125
Open Fist Theatre Company, 213, 221
Orpheum Theater, 211, 222
Osseus labyrint, 214–215, 222

Outdoor activities, 130–143
Outfest, 101
Out of the Closet, 165, 178
Overlook Trail, 139
Ozzie Dots, 165, 178

The Pacific Crest Trail, 137
Pan African Film Festival (Poetry Wall), 100
Pantages Theater, 210, 222
Paradise Cove, 134
Paramount Pictures, 115, 125
Parking, 10, 233–234
Parks, 113–114
The Parlour Club, 189–190, 201
Pasadena City College Flea Market, 150, 178
Peron Antiques and Collectibles, 165, 178
Petersen Automotive Museum, 103–104, 125
Pink Cheeks, 160, 178
Playboy Jazz Festival, 101
Poetry Wall (Berlin Wall), 98
Point Dume, 134
Point Mugu State Park, 133, 137
Polkadots and Moonbeams, 164, 178
Polo Lounge, 193, 201
Pull My Daisy, 163, 178
Pulp, 170, 176
Puppet Masters, 216, 222
Puzzle Zoo, 170, 178–179

Radio stations, 234–235
Rafu Bussan, 161, 179
Raw bars, 66
REDCAT Theater, 210, 222
Redondo Beach Pier, 141
Remix, 165–166, 179
Reservations, accommodations, 18
Restaurants, 48–89. *See also* Restaurant Index
  breakfast, 65–66
  for carnivores, 62
  cheap, 70
  Downtown, 77, 79, 81, 84–89
  gay-friendly, 67
  Hollywood, 77–79, 84–87, 89
  late-night, 60
  LAX, 79, 81
  Little Tokyo, 57–58, 79, 83, 85, 88
  organic, 63–64, 82
  Santa Monica, 76, 86
  Silver Lake, 76–80, 82–84, 86, 88
  vegan, 62–63, 81, 85, 86, 89
  Venice, 81, 84
  West Hollywood, 77–79, 82, 84, 88, 89
  West Los Angeles, 77, 82, 83, 85
Rhino Records, 154, 179
Rialto Theater, 212, 222
Right Choice Caribbean and African Market, 151, 179
River Ride, 101
Rockaway Records, 167, 179
Rock music, 196–197
Rogers Recreation Center, 138
The Room, 197–198, 201
Roosevelt Municipal Golf Course, 131–132
The Roost, 194, 201
Rose Bowl Flea Market, 150, 179
The Roxy Theatre, 196, 202
Rubbish, 156, 179
RumerB, 165, 179

Saint Vincent De Paul's, 157–158, 179
Samuel French Theatre & Film Bookstore, 168, 179–180
San Gabriel Mountains, 133
San Onofre State Beach, 137
Santa Monica
  accommodations, 23–24, 37–39, 41, 43, 44
  diversions, 118, 125, 126
  restaurants, 76, 86
  shopping, 149, 150
Santa Monica Farmer's Markets, 153, 180
Santa Monica Museum of Art, 106, 125
Santa Monica Pier, 141
Santee Alley, 149
Schindler House, 110, 123
Sea Level Records, 167, 180
Self-Help Graphics, 102, 125
Shelter, 157, 180
Shoe stores, 165–166
Shopping, 148–182
The Shortstop, 194–195, 202
Show Pony, 162, 180
Sights and attractions. *See* Diversions
Silver Lake, restaurants, 76–80, 82–84, 86, 88
Silver Lake Farmer's Market, 154, 180
Silverlake Lounge, 191, 202
Silver Lake Reservoir, 131
Skeletons in the Closet, 158–159, 180
S.K. Uyeda Department Store, 160–161, 180
Skylight Books, 156, 180
Smog Cutter, 197, 202
Smoking, 10–11, 235
Soap Plant, 159, 180
Source Figure, 113
Southwest Museum, 96–97, 125
Spaceland, 192, 202
SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center), 98, 126
Spectator sports, 217–218
Spices, 151
The Spotlight, 198, 202
Spring Festival of Flowers, 100
Squaresville, 165, 181
Stair climbing, 141–142
Standard Bar Downtown, 193, 202
STAPLES Center, 217, 222
Stony Point Park, 142
Storyopolis, 169, 181

The Study, 198, 202
Subway/light-rail system, 12, 236
The Sunset Room, 197, 202
Supergo, 172, 181
Surfers Walk of Fame, 141
Surfing, 135–136
Sycamore Canyon, 139

Taschen Store, 169, 181
Tawa's Shiatsu Spa, 143
Taxis, 236
Television and Radio, Los Angeles Museum of, 123
Temple Bar, 191, 202
Thailand Plaza, 151, 181
Thai restaurants, 56–57, 78, 86–88
Theodore Payne Foundation, 115, 126
Tiki Ti, 192, 202
Tipping, 236
Tournament of Roses Parade, 99–100
Track 16 Gallery, 126
Transportation, 6–7, 12, 235–237
Trashy Lingerie, 163, 181
Traveler's Bookcase, 153, 181
Travel stores, 153
Troubadour, 196, 203
TV tapings, 236

UCLA Discovery Center, 140
UCLA men's gymnasium, 138
Uncle Jer's, 161, 181
Universal CityWalk, 126
Upon Shop, 166, 181

Vegan restaurants, 62–63, 81, 85, 86, 89
Velo Pasadena, 172, 181
Venice
  accommodations, 21–22, 40, 44
  beach, 136
  restaurants, 81, 84
Venice Boardwalk (Ocean Front Walk), 136
Veranda Bar, 194, 203
Vietnamese restaurants, 71, 82
Views of the city, best, 8
Vine Street Lounge, 198, 203
Vinyl Fetish, 166–167, 182
Vroman's Bookstore, 155–156, 182

Walt Disney Concert Hall, 99, 126, 210, 222
Wanna Buy a Watch?, 164–165, 182
Warner Brothers Studios, 115, 126
Wasteland, 165, 182
Watts Towers Arts Center, 105, 126
West Adams Heritage Association, 126
West Hollywood
  accommodations, 36–38, 40–44
  nightlife, 199, 201–203
  restaurants, 77–79, 82, 84, 88, 89
West Los Angeles
  accommodations, 42
  restaurants, 77, 82, 83, 85
Westwood Recreation Complex, 138
Westwood Village Memorial Park, 112, 127
Whisky a Go Go, 196, 203
Will Rogers State Park, 114, 127

Y Que, 159, 182

Zanzibar, 190, 203
Zipper, 157, 182
Zoo, Los Angeles, 95–96, 123
Zoo District, 216, 222
Zuma Beach, 135

Accommodations

Argyle Hotel, 32, 36
Artist's Inn and Cottage, 26, 36
Avalon, 31, 36
Banana Bungalow, 22, 37
Beverly Hills Hotel, 27–28, 37
Beverly Laurel Hotel, 31, 37
Bevonshire Motel, 32, 37
Bissell House, 26, 37
Carlyle Inn, 37
Casa Del Mar, 25, 37
Casa Malibu, 24, 37–38
Chateau Marmont, 19, 27, 38
Farmer's Daughter Motel, 32, 38
Figueroa Hotel, 20–21, 38
Georgian Hotel, 23, 38
Hilton Checkers Hotel, 20, 38
Holloway Motel, 29, 38
Hollywood Celebrity Hotel, 30, 39
Hollywood International Hostel, 22, 39
Hollywood Metropolitan Hotel & Plaza, 19, 39
Hollywood Orchid Suites, 30, 39
Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, 20, 39
Hostelling International Santa Monica Hostel, 22, 39
Hotel California, 23, 39
Hotel Carmel, 23, 39
Hotel Metropole, 26, 40
Hotel Villa Portofino, 25–26, 40
The Inn at Venice Beach, 21, 40
Inn on Mount Ada, 26, 40
Le Montrose Suite Hotel, 28, 40
Le Parc Suite Hotel, 28, 40
Liberty Hotel, 22, 40–41
Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, 23, 41
Los Angeles Athletic Club, 21, 41
Lowell's, 28, 41
Maison 140, 25, 41
Millennium Biltmore Hotel, 20, 41
Mondrian, 19, 41–42
New Otani, 29, 42
Omni Hotel, 21, 42
Orlando Hotel, 30, 42
Pavilion Lodge, 26, 42
Ramada Plaza, 29, 42
The Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel, 28, 42
Renaissance Hollywood, 24, 42

Royal Pagoda Motel, 19, 43
San Vicente Inn Resort, 29, 43
Shutters on the Beach, 23, 43
Sofitel Ma Maison Hotel, 27, 43
Standard, 30–31, 43
Standard Downtown, 24, 43
Sunset Marquis Hotel and Villas, 20, 43
Venice Beach Cotel, 22, 44
Venice Beach House, 21–22, 44
Viceroy Santa Monica, 24, 44
West Hollywood Hyatt, 19–20, 44
Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites, 20, 44
W Westwood, 31, 44
Wyndham Bel Age, 27, 44
Zane Grey Pueblo Hotel, 27, 45

Restaurants

ABC Seafood, 60, 76
Alegria on Sunset, 69, 76
Alexander's Brite Spot, 67, 76
Anastasia's Asylum, 61, 76
Angeli Caffe, 68, 77
Angelique Cafe, 59, 77
Apple Pan, 53, 77
Astro, 62, 77
Basix Cafe, 67, 77
Blue Flame, 71, 77
Bob's Coffee & Doughnuts, 61, 77
Café Stella, 59–60, 77
Campanile, 53–54, 78
Canter's, 54, 78
Casa Bianca, 52, 78
Cha Cha Cha, 52, 72, 78
Chan Dara, 57, 78
Chango, 66, 78
Chao Praya, 57, 78
Cheebo, 55, 78
Cieto Lindo, 72, 79
Ciudad, 70, 79
Coffee Table, 66, 79
Colorado Wine Company, 68, 79
Curry House, 57–58, 79
The Daily Grill, 66, 79
Dan Tana's, 65, 79
Dar Maghreb, 56, 79
Dolce, Enoteca e Ristorante, 55, 80
Downbeat Cafe, 61–62, 80
Duke's, 53, 80
Dusty's, 59, 80
Eat Well Cafe, 70, 80
Edendale Grill, 71, 80
El Coyote, 54, 80
Electric Lotus, 64, 80
Encounter, 66, 81
Engine Company No. 28, 70–71, 81
Erewhon, 64, 81
Farfalla Trattoria, 54–55, 68, 81
Fatburger, 55, 81
Fatty's & Co., 63, 81
Fred 62, 67, 81
French Market Café, 59, 81
Gingergrass, 71, 82
Hard Times Pizza, 55, 82
Hugo's, 61, 82
India's Oven, 63, 82
India Sweets and Spices, 64, 82
Inn of the Seventh Ray, 64, 82
The Ivy, 67, 82
Johnny's Pastrami, 55, 82
King's Road Cafe, 61, 83
Kokekokko, 58, 83
Kokomo Cafe, 61, 83
La Fe, 69, 83
La Taquiza, 69, 83
Maco, 70, 83
Madame Matisse, 52, 83
Mao's Kitchen, 60, 84
Marix Tex Mex Café, 67, 84
Masa, 69, 84
Matsuhisa, 59, 84
McCormick and Schmick's, 70, 84
Mel's Diner Drive-In, 60, 84
Miceli's, 54, 84
Millie's, 52, 65, 84–85
Mitsuru Cafe, 58, 85
Moun of Tunis, 56, 85
Musso & Frank Grill, 53, 85
Nova Express, 62, 85
Ostioneria Colima, 66, 85
Paru's, 62–63, 85
Pete's Cafe & Bar, 72, 85
Philippe's, 52–53, 86
Pink's, 56, 86
Prado, 72, 86
Prasada, 63, 86
Psychobabble, 61, 86
Rambutan Thai, 57, 86
Randy's Donuts, 60, 86
Real Food Daily, 63, 86
R-23, 58, 87
Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, 62, 87
Saladang, 56–57, 87
Sanamluang Café, 60, 87
Santa Fe Tortilleria, 69–70, 87
Shin, 58–59, 87
Silver Lake Wine, 68, 87
Skooby's, 56, 87
Sompun, 57, 88
Soot Bull Jeep, 62, 88
Soul Folks Cafe, 72, 88
Tacos Mexico, 69, 88
Tail o' the Pup, 56, 88
Taix, 59, 88
Tantra, 64–65, 88
Tommy's Original World Famous Burger, 55, 88
Tot (Teishoku-of-Tokyo), 58, 88–89
Traxx, 68, 89
Urth Cafe, 63–64, 89
Vermont, 65, 89
Versailles, 69, 89
Water Grill, 66, 89
Yamashiro, 54, 89
Yuca's Hut, 51, 89–52

FROMMER'S® COMPLETE TRAVEL GUIDES

Alaska
Alaska Cruises & Ports of Call
American Southwest
Amsterdam
Argentina & Chile
Arizona
Atlanta
Australia
Austria
Bahamas
Barcelona
Beijing
Belgium, Holland & Luxembourg
Bermuda
Boston
Brazil
British Columbia & the Canadian Rockies
Brussels & Bruges
Budapest & the Best of Hungary
Calgary
California
Canada
Cancún, Cozumel & the Yucatán
Cape Cod, Nantucket & Martha's Vineyard
Caribbean
Caribbean Ports of Call
Carolinas & Georgia
Chicago
China
Colorado
Costa Rica
Cruises & Ports of Call
Cuba
Denmark
Denver, Boulder & Colorado Springs
Edinburgh & Glasgow
England
Europe
Europe by Rail
European Cruises & Ports of Call
Florence, Tuscany & Umbria
Florida
France
Germany
Great Britain
Greece
Greek Islands
Halifax
Hawaii
Hong Kong
Honolulu, Waikiki & Oahu
India
Ireland
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Kauai
Las Vegas
London
Los Angeles
Madrid
Maine Coast
Maryland & Delaware
Maui
Mexico
Montana & Wyoming
Montréal & Québec City
Munich & the Bavarian Alps
Nashville & Memphis
New England
Newfoundland & Labrador
New Mexico
New Orleans
New York City
New York State
New Zealand
Northern Italy
Norway
Nova Scotia, New Brunswick & Prince Edward Island
Oregon
Ottawa
Paris
Peru
Philadelphia & the Amish Country
Portugal
Prague & the Best of the Czech Republic
Provence & the Riviera
Puerto Rico
Rome
San Antonio & Austin
San Diego
San Francisco
Santa Fe, Taos & Albuquerque
Scandinavia
Scotland
Seattle
Seville, Granada & the Best of Andalusia
Shanghai
Sicily
Singapore & Malaysia
South Africa
South America
South Florida
South Pacific
Southeast Asia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Texas
Thailand
Tokyo
Toronto
Turkey
USA
Utah
Vancouver & Victoria
Vermont, New Hampshire & Maine
Vienna & the Danube Valley
Virgin Islands
Virginia
Walt Disney World® & Orlando
Washington, D.C.
Washington State

FROMMER'S® DOLLAR-A-DAY GUIDES

Australia from $50 a Day
California from $70 a Day
England from $75 a Day
Europe from $85 a Day
Florida from $70 a Day
Hawaii from $80 a Day
Ireland from $80 a Day
Italy from $70 a Day
London from $90 a Day
New York City from $90 a Day
Paris from $90 a Day
San Francisco from $70 a Day
Washington, D.C. from $80 a Day
Portable London from $90 a Day
Portable New York City from $90 a Day
Portable Paris from $90 a Day

FROMMER'S® PORTABLE GUIDES

Acapulco, Ixtapa & Zihuatanejo
Amsterdam
Aruba
Australia's Great Barrier Reef
Bahamas
Berlin
Big Island of Hawaii
Boston
California Wine Country
Cancún
Cayman Islands
Charleston
Chicago
Disneyland®
Dominican Republic
Dublin
Florence
Frankfurt
Hong Kong
Las Vegas
Las Vegas for Non-Gamblers
London
Los Angeles
Los Cabos & Baja
Maui
Miami
Nantucket & Martha's Vineyard
New Orleans
New York City
Paris
Phoenix & Scottsdale
Portland
Puerto Rico
Puerto Vallarta, Manzanillo & Guadalajara
Rio de Janeiro
San Diego
San Francisco
Savannah
Vancouver Island
Venice
Virgin Islands
Washington, D.C.
Whistler

FROMMER'S® NATIONAL PARK GUIDES

Algonquin Provincial Park
Banff & Jasper
Family Vacations in the National Parks
Grand Canyon
National Parks of the American West
Rocky Mountain
Yellowstone & Grand Teton
Yosemite & Sequoia/Kings Canyon
Zion & Bryce Canyon

FROMMER'S® MEMORABLE WALKS

Chicago
London
New York
Paris
San Francisco

FROMMER'S® WITH KIDS GUIDES

Chicago
Hawaii
Las Vegas
New York City
Ottawa
San Francisco
Toronto
Vancouver
Walt Disney World® & Orlando
Washington, D.C.

SUZY GERSHMAN'S BORN TO SHOP GUIDES

Born to Shop: France
Born to Shop: Hong Kong, Shanghai & Beijing
Born to Shop: Italy
Born to Shop: London
Born to Shop: New York
Born to Shop: Paris

FROMMER'S® IRREVERENT GUIDES

Amsterdam
Boston
Chicago
Las Vegas
London
Los Angeles
Manhattan
New Orleans
Paris
Rome
San Francisco
Seattle & Portland
Vancouver
Walt Disney World®
Washington, D.C.

FROMMER'S® BEST-LOVED DRIVING TOURS

Austria
Britain
California
France
Germany
Ireland
Italy
New England
Northern Italy
Scotland
Spain
Tuscany & Umbria

THE UNOFFICIAL GUIDES®

Beyond Disney
California with Kids
Central Italy
Chicago
Cruises
Disneyland®
England
Florida
Florida with Kids
Inside Disney
Hawaii
Las Vegas
London
Maui
Mexico's Best Beach Resorts
Mini Las Vegas
Mini Mickey
New Orleans
New York City
Paris
San Francisco
Skiing & Snowboarding in the West
South Florida including Miami & the Keys
Walt Disney World®
Walt Disney World® for Grown-ups
Walt Disney World® with Kids
Washington, D.C.

SPECIAL-INTEREST TITLES

Athens Past & Present
Cities Ranked & Rated
Frommer's Best Day Trips from London
Frommer's Best RV & Tent Campgrounds in the U.S.A.
Frommer's Caribbean Hideaways
Frommer's China: The 50 Most Memorable Trips
Frommer's Exploring America by RV
Frommer's Gay & Lesbian Europe
Frommer's NYC Free & Dirt Cheap
Frommer's Road Atlas Europe
Frommer's Road Atlas France
Frommer's Road Atlas Ireland
Frommer's Wonderful Weekends from New York City
Retirement Places Rated
Rome Past & Present